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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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Milovan Djilas

War

FLOWING from West to East, a great river rolled into a greater river... it has always been this way, lesser rivers flow into greater. Around and about these rivers there have always been battles and wars and frontiers, for life courses through rivers and they divide or bring together various nations at various times.

For three months a battle had raged by these great rivers. As the opposing sides were possessed of equal forces, neither was in a position to endanger the other; and the stalemate was the more complete since winter had set in (a winter offensive requires more men and material), and the armies had dug themselves in along the banks, grouping their forces to annihilate each other in the Spring with the coming of warmer weather and the burgeoning of green. The front cut right through the great river—but every river is indifferent to whether a front runs through it or not, and so it was here. How far the front stretched to the South or to the Northeast where it came up against the other, greater river, and whether fighting was going on along its banks—these appeared to be things of no account. A strip of land barely thirty miles wide between two rivers had become a front with trenches and foxholes and every other kind of dug-out. But the strip of land was indifferent to whether or not it was so lacerated, and so were the fields and vineyards and villages and towns.

But the people who lived by the banks of the rivers were not indifferent, though they too were guiltless of the war that had come. There the earth and the sun were kind to human life, and men lived there. War as a struggle for mastery over men and the conditions under which they live cannot but embroil human life, wherever it appears on the scene—it would have embroiled the lives of these people even if they had not lived there, for it would have caught up with them.

In war there must always be at least two opposing armies (without them there would be no war), and each side strives to destroy everything that might be of value to the other. But can there be anything that is human, anything of the work of a man's mind or hand, which cannot be a source of strength to an enemy? Thus the surest method of weakening him becomes to destroy everything that comes to hand. War has no mind, and it cannot tell what could or could not at any given moment be of value to the opposing side; for this reason, the wisest course of action in war becomes the destruction of absolutely everything—houses and cultivated plots, bridges and museums, and naturally, first and foremost, human beings and their livelihood.

IN THEIR WITHDRAWAL to the west the enemy destroyed all the bridges over the rivers, and all the boats, even the tiny flimsy ones that could hardly hold a pair of lovers (who would want to cling to each other and save each other). Nowhere near the front (nor far from it either, for the front was here today and was there tomorrow) did a single bridge remain: not a ferry, not a raft. Even the boats and dinghies which the fishermen had hidden

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from the withdrawing army were requisitioned by the incoming army; this was not so much because they needed them as because they might be of use to the enemy, for infiltrating spies and saboteurs, or in case they should come back.

People must live, in war and in spite of war, and behind the front the local population tried to reopen the river traffic. But they had no resources and, intelligent as they were, they realised that any new boat would be confiscated. So their sole means of transport was the military motor ferry, for the army had to have communications across the river. After all, an army exists for the very purpose of possessing all that the enemy possesses, all that he does not possess, and all that he might possess.

The soldiers on the ferry were good men —all soldiers are good when they are not soldiers (and even when they are soldiers, provided they are not actually fighting), and they ferried the local population across the river free of charge. This they did with all the kindliness of men who belonged to the people of the land on which the war was being waged. If they did so only at times when the ferry was not needed by the army for the conduct of the war, this was quite understandable, since they were there and were doing what they were doing and were what they were, all because of the war.

Enemy aircraft preferred to fly by day; so the ferry was in operation during the night for the army and usually during the day for the local population, who adapted themselves to the situation. The people shunned the daylight hours and would assemble in the early evening (when there were no enemy aircraft in the skies and their own army had not yet started up their ferry service) or before dawn (when the enemy had not yet sent out their aircraft and their own army was no longer using the ferry).

THE WHOLE of that afternoon, which was overclouded, chilly, and damp, as many winter afternoons are, particularly in wartime, a wail of lament could be heard on the left bank of the river—the side where the front was. There were some soldiers on the bank and three officers, a counter-intelligence major, a captain who was his assistant, and a lieutenant who was in charge of the ferry and responsible for transport across the river. They supposed that one of the peasants (for who but a peasant screams so loudly, stubbornly, frenziedly) was carrying home the body of a brother killed at the front, or perhaps it was a peasant woman with her son or husband. The officers had wanted to make the crossing with these poor creatures before dusk, but they had been forced to hide the ferry among the willows. Enemy reconnaissance planes had been darting out of the clouds every moment of the day, as if to enjoy their inspection of the river (alas, neither silver nor blue, but only mud-coloured) and the naked black willows, sunk in a dark foul swamp that spread away to touch the foul-coloured sky.

When hard grey clouds descended to the very surface of the water and dusk began to set in earlier than usual, the officers decided that there was no longer any danger from aircraft. The ferry was dragged creaking from the swamp.

The wailing noise which had abated suddenly broke out again, as though in expectation that the engine would be shut off and the ferry withdrawn again. A crowd of peasants along with their cattle rushed aboard. An elderly man with several days' growth of beard tried to coax his stubborn horses forward. He made the sort of grimaces that he might have made in his own home, but somewhat more softly, more sadly, for there was a plain coffin on the cart, and on top of it lay an old peasant woman with a kerchief tied round her head covering her mouth and eyes. Her big-boned arm clutched the coffin as though she could not be parted from it.

"Come, come, it is a load of grief you are carrying back to my empty house," said the peasant in a desperate voice, tugging at the reins, and the old woman, wailing and babbling in even greater distress, embraced the coffin with her other arm.

The Captain was fair-haired, gaunt, and

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wiry. He could hardly have worn a different aspect, because the only important thing about him was that he was a Captain. Almost angrily, he shouted at those who had already boarded the ferry, telling them to make room for the cart; then he jumped ashore, grabbed the reins, and tugged the horses towards the ferry: "You leave them to me, Grandpa! I grew up with horses. Make way—you there!"

THE HORSES felt the strong, unyielding arm of the Captain and followed him, though they pricked up their ears and tested the strength of the gangplank and its height above the ground with their hooves. The peasant thanked the Captain, and sang his praises and those of his whole army. The peasant woman did the same, if in the quieter and sadder tones of lament. The Captain seemed embarrassed by all this gratitude. Rubbing his hands, as though to get rid of the dirt (the reins had been greasy and muddy), he replied diffidently and modestly: "That's all right, Grandpa. It's our duty to help people. That's why we're here. Now then—who is in that coffin?"

"Who?" replied the peasant, astonished, pained. "God help me in my grief—it's my son, my only son. Two—I lost two earlier in the war. And now this one."

The Captain wished to say something to comfort him, but this might have amounted to the admission: "Yes, freedom is too expensive." He remained at a loss for words, or he felt that anything he might say would be out of place in face of their bereavement. The woman was evidently the mother of the dead man. She had said nothing, had only sighed. Instead of the Captain, the lieutenant spoke. He came from the helm of the ferry. He was also fair-haired, but tall and with a moustache so pale and sparse that it only accentuated the boyishness of his face; and he too could hardly have worn a different aspect, because the important thing about him was that he was a lieutenant. He said: "What can you expect?—War is war. People get killed every day. Sometimes we have more dead passengers than live ones."

A tall, elderly peasant with a suffering face turned to the father and said: "So that's your son you're bringing back from the front?"

The peasant explained that he had gone to the front with his wife to visit his son, to bring him clean clothes and food. He had been in the wars himself, he knew a soldier's needs. The day before the enemy had made a thrust, and, as bad luck would have it, the son, young and raw (he was not yet twenty) had been struck by a shell. All his insides were torn out, and the parents did not reach him in time to hear his last wish. The old man was all the more pathetic because he did not seem to be referring to himself or to his wife. The mother concluded with a mournful cry: "No use of talking. A terrible tragedy. Back to an empty house for ever."

The tall peasant, his Adam's apple bobbing on his long throat, almost oblivious to what had been told him, said: "My son was killed too. A month ago. I didn't bring him back. I let him lie with his comrades. But you—how did you get hold of a coffin so quickly up at the front? There's no timber there, no carpenters, nothing."

The father groaned. Then, as though he had not heard the question, he said: "I don't know myself where we are taking him. A peasant's foolishness—if we can give him a grave, that's some comfort for us."

The Captain confirmed that others too were taking their dead away from the front, although they had no coffins. He said: "The Command of the People's Army respects national customs, although the right thing would be for a soldier to lie with soldiers."

At that moment the ferry reached the shore. The horses started, and the Captain again took hold of the reins and led them forward. This time they went willingly, their hooves eager to tread on firm ground.

THE ROAD went parallel with an embankment along the river. The soldiers had cut and gravelled a pathway through mud and stagnant puddles from the landing-place to the road. On this short narrow path, ringed on either side with slush ploughed by the wheels of carts, the passengers began to line up in single file in readiness to show

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their passes to the major, who had not yet come out of his little hut on the road. The Captain led the horses forward, ignoring the queue, and people stepped aside to make way, unwillingly, yet without protest, because of a dead body that was being escorted by a military personage. But the thin peasant, the one whose son had been killed a month before, pushed forward and, shaking his stick in his right hand as though it were helping him in his haste, rushed towards the hut, taking no notice of anyone. When the lieutenant warned him to keep in the queue, he simply turned around and, still running, impatiently pointed at the hut with his stick: "I have urgent business in there."

A silence descended. There was only the sound of the cart creaking over the sand and feet squelching in the mud. The thin peasant had something important to communicate to the major in the hut.

And he made no secret of it. While the cart was being pulled up the embankment, the Major stood waiting for it. He gave a signal for it to turn aside. The peasant stood behind him, smiling quizzically and cunningly, hopping first on one foot, then on the other.

"Yes, I heard it myself," he said triumphantly. "There's something alive inside that coffin. Now, Captain, you mustn't be offended at my not telling you—I was afraid the coffin might get pushed into the water. I waited till it was safely across, here where the higher authorities are. And don't you be angry with me either," he said, turning to the parents. "It's one's duty to report anything suspicious. War is war."

The parents stood speechless. The mother was the first to recover, and she began to accuse the peasant of malice, of falsehood. "Have some heart!" she entreated the Major. "Let us be to carry away our grief!"

Emboldened by her cry for help, the father collected himself and also began to plead before the Major. But his manner was as stern and soldierly as it was pathetic: "Be kind-hearted, sir, comrade major! We are parents, he is our son, our village is a long way away."

The Major was swarthy and youthful-looking; his expression was quizzical rather than cold; and he could hardly have worn a different aspect because he was a major. When he answered the peasant he seemed to be speaking not to the man standing in front of him, but to someone not present, who, according to regulations, must be civilly addressed. He said: "We shall investigate the whole affair. There is a regulation for everything. You have nothing to worry about."

Then he went up to the cart, knocked on the coffin with the knuckle of his forefinger, and told them to open it.

The soldiers quickly untied the coffin and got it down without difficulty. The mother continued to lie on it, wailing softly: "It's an evil day and an empty house I have."

But the soldiers had nothing with which to open the coffin, and this once again emboldened the father to make his plea to the Major. "Don't be cruel. Have some kindness in your heart."

The Major seemed not to be listening, nor could he, for he was examining the passengers' passes. Nevertheless, he said to the father, or perhaps it was to one of the passengers: "All right, all right. Everything's going to be all right."

A lorry arrived, and the Major, holding someone's pass in his hand, motioned it to stop.

The Captain knew what to do without being told and asked the driver for pliers and a hammer. Gently he tried to move the mother from the coffin, but she remained, crouching there in silence, completely withdrawn, her fists pressed to her cheeks, bemoaning with even deeper despair her desolate house and dark unhappy fate.

The soldiers quickly opened the coffin, and the Major, who had finished examining passes, gave a signal for the lid to be lifted. Inside lay a clean-shaven, dark-haired young man. He was rolling his eyes, and he moved in an attempt to sit up, then burst into an embarrassed laugh, and remained on his back.

"Is that your son?" asked the Major.

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"Yes," replied the peasant. "My only son. The other two were killed.

"A deserter from the front?" asked the Major again.

"No. I wanted to save him," replied the peasant calmly. "I wanted to keep my family going. What's the use of my land, my house, the whole country for that matter, if my family is wiped out."

THE PASSENGERS stood still and stared inquisitively. But the Major ordered the soldiers to move them on, and they quickly dispersed in disorder at the point of the soldiers' rifles. The lorry drove away as soon as the driver had got his tools back; evidently he had no interest in all these goings-on, or perhaps other matters were engaging his attention. The only person to remain was the thin peasant. No one pushed him away, and he stood there like one who had a right to remain. As though speaking to himself, he said: "And I was expecting a spy, or something like that. I didn't mean any harm, as God is my witness."

Crouching beside the coffin, the peasant woman began to brush the sweat-drenched hair from her son's forehead, crooning soothing words: "Never mind, my darling boy, he's a good man—and it's our own people who are in charge here."

Plucking up his courage, the young man sat up in the coffin. But the Major signalled him to lie down again and, like one obeying an order, he fell back and lay rigid.

"Captain, do your duty," said the Major.

The Captain whipped out a pistol, as though he had been waiting for the command, and snapped a bullet into the breech. Without waiting for any orders, the lieutenant took the mother by the shoulders, but not roughly, and led her away from her son. Then he drew himself up and stepped back a few paces. In a similar manner, a soldier pushed out his rifle and thrust the father aside, next to the mother.

Then the Captain stood astride the coffin and fired a shot into the young man's heart, with such speed and skill that, so it seemed, the explosion sounded before the muzzle had touched the young man's breast or the dumbfounded parents had had time to realise what was happening.

It would appear that the young man did not realise what was happening until the bullet had shattered his heart. He screamed, his body arched up, his head banged insensately against the boards, then suddenly he slumped, as though he had been drained dry of everything.

In an angry voice the Major said: "Take him away!" Then he added, quietly: "We are only doing our duty. We shall continue to do our duty."

The parents did not hear him. They threw themselves on their son in paroxysms of loud grief.

The soldiers moved them away from the coffin by force, but not roughly. They carefully replaced the coffin on the cart, not forgetting to tie it fast. They placed the lid beside the coffin: once again they had no tools, and the ferry had to leave almost immediately, for the military lorries were lining up along the road.

As soon as the soldiers had completed their task, the horses moved on by themselves. The two parents hurried after the cart. And the thin peasant said to himself in astonishment: "How on earth did I come to think of that!"

A KNOT OF WOOD had slipped out of the bottom of the coffin, and blood flowed through it, dark and silent. The mother kept her hand on the coffin, whining incomprehensible words, and the father groaned as he walked beside the horses, forgetting to coax them on.

The lieutenant said: "These peasants are an interesting lot. They still moan about things just as much as they did before."

But no one seemed to hear him—they were all busy.

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John Strachey

Reversing N.A.T.O. Strategy

Preface

THE *Statement on Defence 1962*, which has just been published by the British Government, is confused and indecisive: this is a great improvement on its previous statements on the subject. Earlier statements have laid down, sometimes with clarity, a disastrous military doctrine for Britain in particular, and by implication for the West in general. This year's Statement at least blurs and confuses that doctrine and should to that extent be received with some relief. For when you are being marched resolutely towards disaster, you should be thankful if your guide pauses, looks round him in bewilderment and confesses that he is uncertain of the way. These—and these alone—are the reasons why we should congratulate the British defence authorities upon this latest product of their thinking.

The great issue underlying Britain's—and everybody else's—defence thinking today turns upon the relationship of nuclear and conventional forces. Until and unless that issue is resolved, no coherent estimate of what forces such a country as Britain requires, and consequently of the priorities within the necessarily finite total of her defence effort, is possible. It would be the reverse of the truth to say that the new Defence Statement lays down a workable doctrine on this matter. But what it does do, I repeat, is to qualify and modify the preposterous doctrine which has hitherto been enunciated by the British Government. In order to gauge both the extent and the limitations of the change we may compare the relevant paragraphs of the 1958 with the current Defence statements. Paragraph 12 of the 1958 Statement laid it down that:

> The strategy of NATO is based on the frank recognition that a full scale Soviet attack could not be repelled without resort to a massive nuclear bombardment of the sources of power in Russia.

This is clear, definite and disastrous.

The 1962 Defence Statement, paragraph 8, reads, however, as follows:

> We must continue to make it clear to potential aggressors, however, that we should strike back with all the means that we judge appropriate, conventional or nuclear. If we had nothing but nuclear forces, this would not be credible. A balance must be maintained, therefore, between conventional and nuclear strength. Neither element must be so small as to encourage an aggressor to seek a quick advantage, or to risk a provocative local incident escalating into a major war.

This could mean anything or nothing. If we cannot claim that it is a step in the right direction, it does, at any rate, refrain from taking a step in the wrong direction.

However, in order to substantiate these criticisms of the British Government's successive Defence Policy Statements, it is necessary to discuss in detail the whole question of NATO strategy; of the relation of conventional to nuclear forces and then the subsidiary relation of strategic nuclear forces and tactical nuclear forces. The whole of the rest of this article is devoted to doing so. The best point of entry into this tangled and difficult subject is, I think, to take up the discussion of limited war.

Limited War

IT IS DENIED by two schools of thought that there can be anything in the nature of small or limited wars in the nuclear age. And this is curious. For in this strange new epoch, one of the very few things that we can say with certainty is that small or limited wars, which do not develop into world nuclear holocausts, can occur. For in the first fifteen years of the nuclear epoch a number of them have occurred.

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The Korean war is no doubt the best-known example. The Korean war demonstrated that a war may be fairly large, involving several hundreds of thousands of men on each side, including the forces of one at least of the super powers, and that it may be prolonged—for three years in this case—and yet not become general. But the war in Indo-China is another example. So too, in rather a different way, are the second Arab-Israeli war and the Suez operation. Moreover, it is important to remember that a short, but fierce limited war was being waged, almost simultaneously with the Israeli and Anglo-French operations of 1956, by Russia in order to put down the Hungarian rebellion. And then there have been the Malayan, Mau-Mau, and Algerian wars; but these perhaps may be thought of as guerilla operations, however prolonged and severe, rather than as wars.

In the face of this conclusive evidence, why is it often maintained that there can be no such things as limited wars, in the nuclear age? The reason is, I think, that two very different schools of thought have wished to establish this clearly untenable proposition. On the one hand extreme proponents of the omnipotence of nuclear weapons—chiefly airmen (and in particular, American airmen) have wished to deny, or at least belittle, the possibility of limited war. For they wished to see the national effort concentrated on the provision of nuclear striking power. In so doing they have had the support of much American opinion in general. For some American airmen the very term "limited war" had become a term of derision. And many Americans of all kinds had been profoundly disturbed, shocked, and even humiliated by what seemed the disproportionate effort, in relation to the purely defensive results achieved, of the Korean war. The airmen, in particular, came near to the position that even a nuclear war would be better than another Korean war. For they had by no means envisaged (in 1950–53) the consequences to themselves of an unlimited nuclear war, in which America would suffer, as well as inflict, nuclear bombardment.

At the other extreme of the gamut of opinion, pacifist (or near pacifist) writers are accustomed to maintain the same position, in order to deny that any form of war can fall short of full world disaster. For they wish to be able to take up the position that nothing short of a policy of complete non-resistance will suffice to preserve the world. This state of mind is well illustrated in the distinguished example of Bertrand Russell. With a far too narrow logic, Bertrand Russell has swung from at least considering the possibility of a "preventive war" at the beginning of the nuclear age, when Russia had no nuclear weapons, to the advocacy of policies which must lead towards the surrender of the West to-day. Both extremes of opinion seem to share something of an all-or-nothing type of reaction to the problem. The views of neither school of thought have evidential value.

Importance of Non-Nuclear Arms

STILL, there is the general impression that nuclear arms and nothing else are of importance to-day. If there is little doubt, one may ask, that the initial thermo-nuclear, intercontinental bombardment would prove decisive, what function—other than that of the role of military police in support of the civil power—remains for non-nuclear, or "conventional" (as they are called) armed forces? Why keep up armies and navies when everything will be decided above their heads in a few hours? Even for the purpose of imposing our will upon a recalcitrant minor power, will not the menace of nuclear bombardment be far more effective than conventional force? Will not the greater force always contain within itself the lesser, as it were? Sir John Slessor has tersely expressed the point. "The dog we keep to deal with the cat will be able to deal with the kittens."

Curiously (and expensively) enough, however, experience has already shown that this plausible view is quite false. (And Slessor has come fully to recognise this fact.) A nation or alliance which maintained large-scale nuclear weapons alone would put itself at an extreme disadvantage, as compared to a nation or alliance which maintained both such a nuclear force *and* adequate conventional forces also. The latter would almost certainly be able to have its way on all issues of less than life-and-death importance. And over the years such a series of secondary triumphs might well add up to world hegemony. Hence the importance of armies, navies, and for that matter air forces, using non-nuclear, or *possibly* small nuclear weapons (we shall consider this case carefully) remains very great.

This paradoxical conclusion is explained by the fact that if (but only *if*) there is a rough parity between the contestants in thermo-nuclear power (and if their means of delivery are relatively invulnerable) the deterrent forces will tend to cancel out. Both sides will be extremely

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loath to resort to their use, knowing that fatal retaliation awaits them. Hence there will be a whole range of secondary, but important, issues on which one side can insist on having its way, with considerable assurance that it will not provoke all-out nuclear retaliation. Alliance *A* can, for instance, use its conventional forces to maintain, or subvert, governments in secondary states in some security that Alliance *B* will not unleash its thermo-nuclear forces because of that. But equally if Alliance *B* possesses adequate conventional forces it can use them to prevent the maintenance, or subversion, of the minor governments in question, without much fear that the answer will be thermo-nuclear.

It follows that any alliance which wishes to keep its end up all over the world will be rash indeed to deprive itself of conventional forces adequate to hold their own in exercises of force which may range all the way from police action in aid of the civil power, to a war at least of Korean size and duration, and for all we know, to a larger size still. We may confirm this statement by observing that, for example, Russia would have been in grave difficulties in Hungary in 1956 if she had possessed only thermo-nuclear forces. Not only would she have risked starting a thermo-nuclear exchange if she had blotted out Budapest with a 10-megaton bomb or rocket; such an act would have had the most dire consequences on her reputation; and finally it might have led, in the absence of Russian ground troops, to unmanageable guerilla warfare in the rest of Hungary.

AGAIN, AS THE American Government in the event concluded, it would have been both too risky, and probably ineffective, to have dropped H- or A-bombs on the jungle round Dien-Bien-Phu, in an attempt to preserve French colonial power in Indo-China. And, in this case America did not possess the will (or perhaps even the ability) to commit the necessary ground troops. And so the local Communists were able to reach a compromise settlement fairly favourable to themselves. The Korean example is also relevant, in the sense that the real choice turned out to be between letting the opposing alliance have its way or oppose it by conventional means. Finally, the Israeli-Anglo-French operation against Egypt is instructive. Here it is arguable that if Britain and France had possessed the right kind of conventional forces, which could be deployed within days rather than months, they could have imposed their will on Nasser, at least temporarily. (In my opinion this would have been a disastrous kind of success, because it would have led merely to a long-drawn-out guerilla war with the Arab world. But this has nothing to do with the military case.) In any case no one supposed it possible for Britain to use her quite sufficient nuclear power to coerce Egypt. And in the end even the slow motion conventional forces which the British and French in fact used would undoubtedly have been (disastrously) successful if, on this occasion, the Western alliance had not been hopelessly split, with its predominant power, America, aligned (rightly in my view) with Russia to restrain the British and French.

Such instances could be multiplied. But these may suffice to show the undeniable importance which conventional forces have had, to both sides, during the fifteen years of the nuclear epoch. Who can doubt that such examples will (unfortunately) occur again in the future?

NATO & Europe's Special Case

THERE IS ONE AREA of possible conflict between the Communists and non-Communist alliances of which it has been maintained with special vehemence that, here at least, there can be no such thing as limited war. In Europe, we are told, "any war must rapidly expand to the full thermo-nuclear level." And yet, paradoxically, this is the one area in which the non-Communist alliance stations (fairly) considerable conventional forces. What are they there for? For if it were true that any war in Europe must quickly "spiral up" into the thermo-nuclear exchange, it is hard to see what difference the presence of 20 or 30 NATO divisions on the ground would make.

NATO theory and practice are evidently here at variance. And fortunately NATO practice, in so far as it is implemented, is very much to be preferred to NATO theory. For it is simply not true that any war in Europe must become thermo-nuclear. The only sense in which we could know that this would be so would be if we were really determined to make it true, by responding to any Russian, or satellite, use of violence by loosing S.A.C. on Russia.

It was, no doubt, during the period of American monopoly, and then preponderance, in thermo-nuclear power that this doctrine of "the impossibility of limited war in Europe" was promulgated. It was intended as a warning. During this period it may have been plausible.

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To-day it is not. It is easy to imagine a dozen moves by the Communist forces in Europe which no one can really suppose would trigger off the thermo-nuclear exchange, *now that what is in question is an exchange*. Therefore if NATO possessed no conventional forces, or inadequate conventional forces, there are a dozen things which the non-Communist alliance would have to suffer in impotence.

Nor would such Eastern moves necessarily remain unimportant. Sooner or later we may have (a second) experience of one of them, namely a renewed attempt to make the Western presence in Berlin impossible. Or violent intervention might occur in a dispute between the two Germanies. Or, more grave still, an attempt might be made to occupy Denmark in a few hours and so open the Baltic. Or, far more likely, the Russian move might be in connection with some event which it is as impossible to foresee to-day as it was impossible to foresee the Hungarian uprising before 1956. We cannot know what the event might be, but we can know very well, unless we choose wilfully to blind our eyes, that any such medium-sized Russian move in Europe would, in the absence of adequate NATO forces on the ground, confront the West with the almost unbearable dilemma of submission or of launching the thermo-nuclear exchange. Who can suppose that the decision of the American President (and it would be his decision alone) would be to start the thermo-nuclear exchange in such circumstances? Therefore for NATO to possess no forces on the ground, or merely token ground forces, would be a formula for piecemeal capitulation.

So much is, perhaps, gradually coming to be conceded, as the facts of thermo-nuclear parity begin to be appreciated. But it may still be said that if NATO conventional forces barred the way to such medium-sized moves as these, the resultant fighting would still be sure to spiral up into a thermo-nuclear exchange. Of course such a danger exists. The danger of the spread and intensification of even the most limited war is always grave. But once again how can we *know* that the worst must happen, unless we really mean that we ourselves are determined to make it happen? And that would mean that we were in fact determined to turn every war in Europe into a nuclear war. But if we have not made up our minds to start the spiral ourselves, why should there be anything peculiar about the soil of Europe which would make it impossible for a violent initiative to remain limited there, in the same way that the limited wars mentioned above have remained limited?

If, however, so much as this is conceded it becomes necessary drastically to revise existing NATO theory and practice. If we have a real intention to stop a medium-sized Russian move on the ground by conventional forces, we must take far more seriously than hitherto the question of both the quantity and quality of the NATO divisions. To take the question of quantity first. The NATO Supreme Commander tells us that he requires some 30 first-class, well-equipped and mobile divisions. He has in fact some 20 by no means first-class or well-equipped divisions. Does anyone suppose that it is beyond the capacity of such rich, populous, and militarily-experienced states as Britain, France, West Germany, and America, to mention the chief allies alone, to provide the extra 10 divisions and to bring the whole 30 to a really high standard? Is it not perfectly clear that the failure is here one of *doctrine*? The NATO governments have never yet appreciated what is the true function of their ground forces in Europe. They have talked vaguely of providing "a trip-wire," or of "psychological reassurance," phrases which revealed that they supposed that all that really matters is S.A.C. and its thermo-nuclear weapons in the background. They have never fully realised that the era of Western nuclear predominance is over; they have never faced the military necessities of the era of nuclear parity. They have talked manifest nonsense about the impossibility of matching "the Eastern hordes" except by throwing nuclear weapons at them, ignoring the simple fact of arithmetic that Western Europe is more populous than Russia and that Russia is hardly likely to employ, say, Hungarian divisions in the West. No doubt they have talked like this partly because of the pain and expense of providing adequate ground forces adequately equipped; but it has also been because of a failure to think out what is the *function* of those ground forces.

Tactical or Battlefield Weapons

AND THEN a further complication has arisen to bedevil the attempt at clear thinking on the subject of limited war. When, during the nineteen-fifties, the NATO commanders saw that the NATO governments were not going to provide them with adequate ground forces, they

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sought, and thought that they had found, a new way out. And this was to equip such ground forces as they had with new and relatively small types of nuclear weapons, which were contemporaneously being developed in America, for use, not in intercontinental bombardment, but on the battlefield or close behind it, as a new sort of artillery in support of ground forces. In this way, it was supposed, the lack of NATO divisions could be compensated for.

This argument seemed logical as long as the same idea did not occur to the Russians. But that period proved short. Mr. Khrushchev is now enthusiastically engaged in, as he puts it, "gearing" the whole Russian ground forces to the use of small, tactical, or battlefield, nuclear weapons—call them what you will. Directly that has happened the *differential* advantage hoped for by the NATO commanders disappears. Large forces equipped with tactical nuclear weapons may be expected to predominate over small forces so equipped, no less than large conventional forces predominate over small conventional forces. Arguments have now been produced to the effect that, anyhow, tactical nuclear weapons favour the defence against the attack. But these arguments are strongly contested by some military authorities. The layman may be pardoned for supposing that no one has any idea what their effect would be, since there is absolutely no experience of their use.

The introduction of tactical nuclear weapons to redress the balance between the ground forces in Europe was, then, a wholly unsuccessful move. But this is not to say that they could now be abandoned. Once the Russians have possessed themselves of such weapons it is manifestly impossible to ask NATO troops to face them with conventional weapons alone.[1] One might as well ask them to throw away their automatic rifles and resume the pike. There remains the question of whether the Russians would have introduced tactical nuclear weapons if NATO had not done so. Perhaps they would: if so little has been lost. But it is extremely dangerous to harbour the illusion that something has been gained by our adoption of these weapons; that we can in some mysterious way "answer" a Russian attack (of whatever size), made with conventional weapons alone, by resorting to tactical nuclears. One can perhaps conceive of circumstances in which NATO forces would be driven to do this. But we must realise that they would immediately be exposed to a Russian riposte in kind and that there is little reason to suppose that they would have acquired any *differential* advantage by shifting the contest up one step from the conventional to the tactical nuclear level. And yet the illusion that "we must have tactical nuclears to compensate for the Russian masses" persists in NATO circles. This is mere nostalgia for the period of Western nuclear predominance.

This illusion is particularly dangerous because it is leading to a situation in which the NATO forces in Europe, partly because of the nature of their equipment and even more because of the nature of their *training*, will soon feel themselves unable to undertake more than a border skirmish without the use of tactical nuclear weapons. Lip-service is paid at NATO headquarters to the need for preserving the capacity to fight with conventional weapons alone. But conversation with officers of, at any rate, the British NATO contingent makes it clear that the doctrine has spread that it would be impossible to meet any considerable Russian move, even if undertaken with conventional weapons alone, except by using tactical nuclears from the outset. It is contended that troops cannot be asked to have a dual capacity at any rate in the same theatre of war.

This disastrous doctrine ignores the obvious fact that it presents the Russians with the opportunity to confront NATO with the same dilemma, albeit on a lower level, as we saw would be afforded if NATO possessed little or nothing but heavy, strategic thermo-nuclear striking forces. In this case too, the Russians might use a few divisions in a strictly conventional role in support, to take an example at random, of some European Communist or pro-Communist or even neutralist party, or government, which had got into a civil war with the opposite forces in its own country. (Or again one can think of the coercion of a heretical Communist government, on the Yugoslav model.) NATO might well be charged by the vote of the United Nations Assembly to stop Russian "intervention." (We should be back in something analogous to the Spanish situation of the nineteen-thirties.) What would be the position of the NATO governments if they were informed by their commanders that nothing could be done unless tactical nuclear weapons were used from the outset?

[1] See my article, "Nuclear Chess," ENCOUNTER (August, 1958).

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Escalation

NATO *might* use tactical weapons in such a situation. There is nothing flatly incredible about it, as in the former case of responding by the thermo-nuclear bombardment of Russia. But let us observe what must happen if we did. In the first place the inhabitants of the disputed state would be sacrificed. However geographically limited war waged with tactical nuclear weapons might remain, there would be nothing limited about it for the inhabitants of the area in which it was fought. (For of course the Russians would respond in kind—they could not do less.) The inhabitants would be killed. Therefore it is easy to imagine passionate appeals from the country in question to the United Nations Assembly asking that body to counter-instruct the NATO governments against intervention, since Russian occupation was by far the lesser evil.

More serious still, the NATO decision to use tactical nuclear weapons would have started the horribly dangerous process known in defence discussions as "Escalation." Escalation simply means putting your feet upon the fatal escalator that leads upwards, by a process of challenge and response, all the way from the local disturbance, through conventional limited war, through limited war using tactical nuclear weapons, to the thermo-nuclear exchange. For just as there is no law that every limited war will become unlimited, so also there is no assurance that one day one of them will not "escalate" or "spiral up" into a thermo-nuclear exchange. Indeed there is always serious danger that one will. For to set against the dread that every government which is not lost to reason must feel at the idea of blowing up a considerable part, at least, of the world, there is always a temptation to "escalate." It will always be extremely difficult for a government which has just seen its own forces checkmated, and perhaps annihilated, by an opponent who has "escalated" to the next stage up in weapons, to accept defeat. This would be far more difficult than to accept repulse, without clear-cut defeat, such as the Communist alliance accepted in Korea for example, when that repulse was inflicted by using the same kind of weapons with which the original move was made.

For these reasons the present tendency of NATO to discount, both in theory and more still in practice, the possibility of meeting anything but the smallest Russian moves in Europe on the conventional level, is deeply to be deplored. It should be reversed at the earliest possible moment. That will mean, of course, the provision of at least the full 30 divisions required by the NATO authorities.

The Thirty Divisions Target

NATURALLY to provide 30 really well-equipped and trained divisions will require a considerable effort. Providing the man-power is probably the smaller part of the problem. Britain for example would probably merely have to live up to her original pledge to provide 4 divisions (or their equivalent in brigade groups), and she could do this (though not much more) without conscription. But there is one condition. That we give up the silly anachronism of scattering "Imperial garrisons" —for a largely non-existent Empire—about the world. What we want in that connection is air-transportable brigade groups kept at a high state of readiness either in the United Kingdom or in Germany and some, though by no means all, of the existing overseas bases for stock-piling.

France would have to cease to use practically her entire army for narrowly national purposes in Algeria, and provide, say, half-a-dozen first-rate divisions. And so on. It is ridiculous to pretend that Western Europe cannot provide the 30 divisions required. To equip them superbly, and train them superbly (and nothing less will do), would undoubtedly be a costly matter. It might cost Britain £50–£100 million more on the Army Estimates, for example—out of a Defence Budget of £1,700 million. But again, to say that it is impossible for such rich nations as these to do the job—nations which are spending at present no more than from 5 per cent to 10 per cent of their national incomes on defence—is plain prevarication. The truth is that the Western governments do not want to do the job because they have never understood the point of it. They have never appreciated the nature of the new period of nuclear parity which they have entered or the necessities it imposes upon them. And so out of our ignorance, stupidity, meannness, and incomprehension, we are failing to provide those forces which can alone ensure that we shall not be faced with the intolerable dilemma of piecemeal surrender or world destruction. If we fail to provide these forces it is not difficult to suggest from historical experience what will happen. We shall choose

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first one, and then the other of those intolerable alternatives. We shall allow our opponents to "get away with it" on several occasions. And then at the last minute, when nothing short of all will be enough, we shall be driven to resist, since complete surrender will now be the only alternative. It has happened before.

Symmetry Again

AT THIS POINT the full application of the principle of symmetry comes into view. This does not mean that it is necessary to match the Russian ground forces man for man. But we now see that nothing less than at least an approximate symmetry of power *at every level*, conventional, tactical nuclear, thermo-nuclear, is indispensable to the stability of the balance. For if either side lets itself become markedly inferior, at any level, it will be faced with the dilemma of "escalating" to the next level above or of surrender. And once the process of escalation has begun the danger of its continuing to the end is acute. This is not to say, however, that once even the tactical nuclear level of conflict has been reached, a full thermo-nuclear exchange is "inevitable." How do we know? In this field no one has any experience to guide them. Therefore it seems foolish loudly to proclaim that total disaster is certain if the first tactical nuclear is detonated. If we convinced our opponents of that we might regret it one day. What we must convince our own governments and military authorities of is this: once we take the first, major step in escalation from the conventional level to the tactical nuclear level, we have immensely increased the danger of going all the way to the thermo-nuclear exchange. The one obvious clear-cut halting place is at the conventional level. That is why it is criminal negligence on our part to fail to provide the necessary conventional forces to hold our own at that level.

The Limits of Limited War

THUS FAR we have defined the need for NATO conventional capacity in terms of meeting some medium-sized Russian initiative —the seizing of a city, or a small country; armed intervention in a dispute between the two Germanies; support or subversion of "their" or "our" types of government in a border country, etc. But what, it will be asked, should our response be if Russia launched a general invasion of Western Europe with "horse, foot, and artillery" and with the evident intention of occupying the whole continent? Is it contended that NATO either could or should limit its response to such an onslaught to resistance by conventional arms?

Now such a Russian invasion might itself either use conventional arms alone or it might use tactical nuclear weapons. In the latter case NATO would, of course, have to respond in kind by using our tactical nuclears. This is why we have to have them. Otherwise our forces would be quite helpless if the Russians decided to use theirs. But if the Russians confined themselves to conventional weapons, even in a full-scale invasion, should we or could we resist them by these means alone? Existing NATO doctrine is extremely averse to our attempting to do so. It is argued that unless we now threaten to use, and sincerely intend to use, our tactical nuclears first, we shall fail to deter the Russians from such an onslaught. But in fact all we should do by such threats, if the Russians really had decided on a general invasion, would be to force them to use their tactical nuclears too. In other words, in this case also NATO doctrine appears to be still living in the previous period of a Western monopoly, or near monopoly, in nuclear power.

The second argument used to support existing NATO doctrine is that it is in any case impossible for NATO to resist Russian numbers by means of conventional weapons alone. This view is strongly contested by some eminent military authorities. Captain Liddell Hart, for example, has repeatedly made calculations tending to show that if NATO would in fact provide 30 first-rate divisions on the central front in Europe, we should have a good chance of halting even a full Russian conventional invasion. Experience of the last war indicates, it seems, that the defence usually succeeded in holding unless the attack possessed more than a 3-to-1 superiority. (And instances are given where the defence succeeded at an inferiority of 5- or even 10-to-1.) It is further calculated that for logistic reasons the Russians could not deploy more than 90 divisions in a Westerly direction; so, with 30 NATO divisions, the ratio of 3-to-1 would be achieved. Finally, Captain Liddell Hart has made interesting calculations on what he terms the ratio of force to space. These calculations tend to show that the length of front which any given number of men can hold has been steadily increasing for the past two hundred

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years, owing of course to the enormous growth of fire-power. And he considers that 30 divisions, highly-equipped and mobile, would suffice to hold the Central European front.

IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE for a layman to express a decided opinion on this controversy. Moreover, it is the less necessary to do so because it should, in my view, be frankly admitted that if the Russians launched a general invasion of Western Europe with 90 divisions we should have reached the very limits of limited war. For the fact is that in doing so they would have unequivocally announced their intention of dominating the world immediately and by military force. In that extreme event an American thermo-nuclear response becomes much more credible. The American President of the day would have the awful responsibility of permitting an almost certain Russian world hegemony, if he allowed all Western Europe to be conquered, or of destroying Russia and killing perhaps 80 per cent or 90 per cent of her inhabitants (and of accepting the consequences of Russian retaliation). For there is no doubt about the ability of the Strategic Air Command *in such circumstances*, when it was presented with the opportunity of first strike, to do this.

The truth is that it would be almost incredibly rash of the Russians to start a *general* war by means of an invasion of Western Europe with conventional arms. For by doing so they would hand the opportunity for a thermo-nuclear first strike to S.A.C. on a platter. And however much we may criticise its vulnerability for purposes of second-strike retaliation, *as a first-strike* force, undamaged and undiminished, S.A.C. is an almost inconceivably terrible instrument. Whether indeed the President's military advisers would report to him that they were confident that S.A.C. could, even in these highly favourable circumstances, knock out all the Russian rocket sites and bomber bases, and so avoid retaliation on America, is another matter. But no doubt S.A.C. could greatly diminish such Russian retaliation and also utterly devastate Russia.

Therefore unless the Russians have failed completely to appreciate the nuclear equation as it exists to-day (and this does not now seem to be so, to judge from the recent Russian pronouncements) one of the least likely of all Russian moves would be a full-scale conventional invasion of Western Europe. If the Russians meant deliberately to set out upon the military conquest of the world (itself, in my opinion, a remote hypothesis) they would not dare to begin in any other way than by a counter-force strike upon S.A.C. To begin in any other way would be to lay themselves open to almost certain destruction.

In other words, America retains, we are appreciating, a good deal of what is now often called "Type II deterrence" against, at any rate, a full invasion of Western Europe. It may be guessed that those who think chiefly in terms of such a full-scale Russian invasion, either using conventional or still more, using tactical nuclear weapons, have not realised the nature of the thermo-nuclear balance. They have not appreciated the fact that for either side to expose itself to the other's first strike by beginning what would be unmistakably a general war at one of the lower levels, would be to court its own destruction. Ought we to conclude, then, that it is unnecessary for NATO to make the very considerable, if quite feasible, effort necessary to provide conventional forces which should be able to hold a full-scale Russian invasion of Western Europe with, say, 90 divisions? Can NATO content itself with providing conventional forces capable of dealing with medium-sized Russian actions? It is tempting to answer yes to such a question, in view of the double improbability of the contemplated situation arising. It is improbable that Russia will set out to conquer the world by military means, and it is improbable that if she did so she would dare to choose any opening move other than all-out counter-force action against S.A.C. But improbable events sometimes happen. And think of what would be at stake if this improbable event *did* happen. An American President would have to make what can only be described as the most awful decision which any man in human history has been called upon to make. If NATO were manifestly incapable of holding the Russians on the ground, he would have to decide on whether to acquiesce in Russian, or Sino-Russian, world hegemony, or by loosing S.A.C. to destroy the lives of many hundreds of millions of human beings, including probably many tens of millions of his own fellow-countrymen.

IS IT NOT THE DUTY of the NATO states, including of course America herself, to leave open a third course of action, that of resisting such a Russian invasion by conventional forces which were large and well-equipped enough to stand a good chance of success? After all, the difference in the number of first-rate divisions which NATO

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must in any case maintain in order to meet secondary Russian moves, and the number needed to meet full-scale Russian invasion, is not overwhelmingly large. What is at issue here is rather the question of reserves. If secondary operations alone are to be contemplated at the conventional level, reserve forces are not particularly important. But if the possibility of having to hold a major conventional attack by conventional means is contemplated, the whole question of reserves, of both men and materials, resumes its traditional importance and the NATO nations should provide them. However small the chance of a Russian conventional invasion may be, I for my part consider that it will be negligent if NATO does not provide the forces necessary to meet it conventionally—even if to do so is in the nature of a re-insurance.

Nevertheless it remains far more probable that Russia will continue to restrict herself to moves which are much below the level of an aggression which could credibly evoke a first strike by S.A.C. What does not seem to be understood by the NATO authorities is that quite large acts of aggression come within this category. Is it credible that an American President would unleash S.A.C., with all the appalling consequences of such an act, including the extreme risk of the destruction of a good many American cities, with the loss of several tens of millions of American lives, for anything short of a Russian move on the scale of a general invasion of Western Europe? (Or, of course, a thermo-nuclear attack on Western Europe or America herself—of moves, that is to say, which unmistakably indicated an immediate intention to conquer the world by military force.) For all acts of aggression below that level, we cannot rely upon the deterrent powers of S.A.C. Therefore why should Russia run so hideous a risk as to provoke even the possibility of the unloosing of S.A.C. upon her when there are a dozen secondary, but very important, gains which she can make with relative impunity, so long as NATO fails to produce the forces necessary to bar her way at the lower levels? The fact is that such acts as the general invasion of, or thermo-nuclear attack upon, Western Europe mark the limits of limited war. For it is as foolish to say that all acts of aggression, however large, will remain limited as to say that every act of aggression must lead to general war.[2]

What Should Be Done

IT IS MUCH EASIER to criticise the present policy and military doctrines of NATO than to suggest a viable alternative. Nevertheless there is clearly an obligation upon the critic to do so: and the broad outlines, at least, of a new policy and of new military doctrines for NATO are implicit in the above criticisms.

In the first place, it is important to realise that the essence of the matter lies in what policies and doctrines as to the use, or non-use, of nuclear weapons are adopted by the NATO high command. For the whole character of the NATO forces, their numerical strength, the types of armaments which they will possess, their disposition, their training and for that matter their efficiency and morale, will inevitably depend upon this issue. To put the point bluntly: experience has shown that if the doctrine of an early and almost automatic first use of tactical, and then if necessary of strategic, nuclear weapons is adhered to, no conventional forces fit in quantity, equipment, or quality, to meet a considerable emergency will ever be raised. Why indeed should the NATO governments put themselves to the expense and trouble of doing so, if their generals tell them that such conventional forces will never be used except at most for a few days' delaying action? If on the other hand the considerations[3] set out above, which take account of the fact of nuclear parity, are made the foundation of Western military thinking, the need for adequate conventional forces becomes immediately, and imperatively, evident.

It is only in so far as it affects this basic issue that the question of NATO as "a third nuclear power" assumes importance. Whether or not some, no doubt small, part of the West's strategic nuclear deterrent force should be in some sense detached from the rest, as to its command and control and, possibly, its geographical location, is a matter upon which a good deal can be said on both sides. Thus to detach a part of the force would be illogical and inconvenient. But if—though only *if*—the overriding condition of securing the very maximum

[2] Some of these considerations are set out more fully than is possible here by Professor Bernard Brodie in Chapter 9 of his *Strategy in the Missile Age*, O.U.P., Princeton University Press, 37s. 6d.

[3] It should be needless to say that there is nothing original about these considerations. They are in the main common ground for most of the American defence experts, and for much informed, but as yet unofficial, opinion in Britain.

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possible degree of invulnerability were satisfied, and if some of the European nations felt greatly reassured, then there might be a case for arranging that, as under the present (1962) American proposal, a few Polaris-carrying submarines are put under the Supreme NATO command.

The 1960 U.S. Proposals

THE PROPOSALS laid before the other NATO governments by the Eisenhower Administration in the autumn of 1960, and the policy recommended by General Norstad at the NATO Parliamentarians Conference at the same time, were of a very different character. Briefly what was proposed was that a large number of solid-fueled, medium-range ballistic missiles of the Polaris (or similar) kind should be installed in continental Europe, no doubt in hardened or mobile sites, and that these should be placed under General Norstad's command—though their warheads would remain in American custody. It was explained that the object would be, not to make NATO into a "third nuclear power" but merely to "modernise" the present tactical nuclear armoury of NATO, which essentially consists in nuclear-bomb carrying aircraft. It was, we were assured, to be a mere "modernisation" programme; and the Polaris-type missiles, although they have a range of well over 1,000 miles and carry thermo-nuclear warheads of more than half-a-megaton in power, were described as "tactical weapons"!

Who can doubt that if this policy were adopted, all attempt to raise, train, and equip adequate conventional forces would be abandoned? The West would have proclaimed, with all the matchless eloquence of deeds, that it was pinning all its hopes upon deterring any Russian aggression—beyond a mere frontier incident—by a nuclear response. Moreover this would be a nuclear response which however much we might, absurdly, label it "tactical," would in fact be a strategic thermo-nuclear response.

The real objection to such a policy is not that it would be "provocative" (though it would also be that) but that it would be fatally weak. For it would lack one indispensable pre-requisite of effective deterrence, namely credibility. For how could any American President in fact authorise General Norstad to respond to say a medium-sized Russian conventional aggression by firing his Polarises? The President could not avoid the knowledge that he must reckon with a full Russian counter-response upon both Europe and America. He could not avoid the knowledge, that is to say, that in releasing General Norstad to fire thermo-nuclear rockets, he was in fact initiating the full thermo-nuclear exchange. And how could he do that for any reason short of an unmistakable Russian move for full and immediate conquest of the world?

Therefore the equipment of NATO with a "multi-gun battery" of medium-range thermo-nuclear weapons, *instead of* adequate (as they certainly would be) conventional forces would, paradoxically enough, be in the nature of a "green light" to our opponents for any aggressive action short of a decisive attempt to conquer Western Europe. Equally paradoxically, at the same time, and not unnaturally, it would be regarded by the Russians as an extremely provocative move. For it would in fact be a menacing addition to the West's first-strike capacity. This policy would seem, therefore, to possess the fatal combination of being weak and provocative at the same time.

But if the proposal to equip NATO with medium-range land-based thermo-nuclear missiles points precisely in the wrong direction, what in fact would be a policy which would satisfy the considerations set out above? We may at least make certain suggestions.

Two Suggestions

FIRST, the provision of at any rate 30 first-rate, highly-trained, really well-equipped divisions (or their equivalents) primarily designed and trained for the conventional role, on the European central front. The provision of adequate reserves could then be tackled.

Second, the provision of some relatively short-range, genuinely tactical, nuclear weapons for the support of this force in case the enemy initiated the use of tactical nuclear weapons. This question of the provision and role of tactical nuclear weapons has always been, and remains, by far the most difficult issue of NATO doctrine. On the one hand, it is clear that so long as the Russians possess weapons of this sort the West must possess them also. This is so both for the sake of the morale of our troops and also because it would be wrong to forgo the possibility, however slender it may be, that a war which had been taken to the tactical nuclear level might yet be halted there, before

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the world as a whole had gone up in flames. What then should be the character of NATO's tactical nuclear weapons? No doubt this question can only be answered tentatively and provisionally, for technical innovation is continually changing the terms of the problem. But for the 'sixties at least some defence experts strongly favour developing intensively the existing form of the delivery of tactical or nuclear weapons, namely manned aircraft. It is strongly denied that for this purpose the manned aircraft is even approaching the end of its effective life. Developed for "contour flying" (*i.e.*, ultra-low-level attack) where it is undetectable by radar, and for V.T.O.L. (Vertical Take-off and Landing) it is likely to remain a most formidable, and above all flexible, weapon. It has several advantages over alternative systems of delivery. First, manned aircraft are genuinely dual-purpose weapons. They can carry a conventional or nuclear bomb-load at will. Thus, if we are to take seriously the provision of 30 divisions, designed essentially for the conventional role, these aircraft must be provided in any case. Second, manned aircraft can be used either on the battlefield or some way behind it. Third, they can carry almost any size of nuclear weapons, including the smaller sub-kiloton fission weapon. Fourth, they can be positioned well behind the armies under separate command and control from the ground forces.

We may compare these characteristics with the various forms of "nuclear artillery" which are being developed. These consist in rockets and artillery pieces capable of throwing small nuclear weapons over relatively short distances. The main objection to reliance upon these delivery systems is that by their nature, they must be more or less closely integrated with the actual fighting units of the ground forces. Indeed in the case of really small weapons such as the *Davy Crockett*, this may mean integration right down to the battalion or even platoon level. But when once nuclear weapons have been intermingled with the ground forces to this extent it is difficult to retain any genuine capacity for conventional warfare. The command and control of battalion and platoon weapons must tend to fall, whatever the paper regulations, into the hands of junior officers. It is difficult to suppose that such officers would, or could, always forgo their use, if defeat, with the possible destruction of their unit, were the alternative. Hence their widespread adoption would appear to spell the end of any attempt to create a considerable conventional capacity for the NATO forces.

FOR ALL THESE REASONS the further development of powerful air forces, capable of delivering either conventional or nuclear weapons, has great attractions as the best available policy for NATO to adopt, in this most difficult region of the tactical nuclear weapon. It may be objected that the Russian ground forces may soon be found to have had small tactical nuclear weapons of the "artillery" type integrated with them. Are we, it may be asked, to deny them to our troops? Certainly it would be impossible to do so unless our troops could be, visually and audibly, assured, during their exercises, of powerful air support, which, it would be pointed out, could be used at short notice in the nuclear role. But given such support—especially from V.T.O.L., short take-off, and contour-flying aircraft—which if we give our minds and our money to it can certainly be developed in the next few years—an effective and convincing answer to the Russian potential at the tactical nuclear level could be provided. It would no doubt have to be made clear, and that publicly, that if the Russians used their "nuclear artillery," the Western response would not be to reply with exactly similar weapons, but to drench the Russian front and immediate rear with nuclear weapons carried in manned aircraft.

It is necessary to record, however, that other defence experts strongly deny the efficacy of manned aircraft in the above role, at any rate until V.T.O.L. and/or short take-off aircraft are available, owing to the vulnerability of airfields to first-strike attack by medium-range rockets. I should have thought that this point could have been met by really drastic (and no doubt expensive) measures of dispersal of even existing types of aircraft. It is further alleged that the new anti-aircraft rocket artillery is making the delivery of either conventional or nuclear weapons from manned aircraft more and more difficult. But is this true if the low-level method of attack is adopted?

In the last resort the layman, somewhat confounded by the differing views of the experts, can only fall back upon insisting upon the principle that the tactical nuclear deterrent, however delivered, shall be held well back, under a separate chain of command, and never integrated with the front-line ground forces. Moreover such a deterrent, again however de-

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livered, should be genuinely tactical in the sense that it should have a range of not more than a hundred or so miles: that in a word it should clearly be for battlefield support and "counter-battery" work, not for the strategic bombardment of the enemy's homeland.

Should We Never Strike First?

IF SUCH a provision of (1) ground forces genuinely adequate in both quantity and quality to put up a most determined resistance to a Russian conventional attack and (2) powerful air forces and/or other medium-range delivery vehicles in support, capable of either a conventional or a nuclear role, were provided, I can visualise few circumstances in which it could ever be to the advantage of the West to initiate nuclear war. It has, therefore, been suggested that the West would have much to gain and little to lose by making a declaration that we would never use nuclear weapons first. Without prejudice to the political advantages of such a course, it may be useful to remember that the actual advantage, by way of stabilising the military situation, would be likely to follow, not from such a declaration, which might or might not be believed, but from the adoption of military doctrines, and of a military posture, of the type just outlined. For such a military posture would also make it clear to any informed observer that abstention from the initiation of nuclear warfare was in fact the firm intention of the West. It would be the provision (1) of invulnerable, characteristically second-strike, deterrent strategic nuclear forces; (2) of adequate conventional forces, and (3) of tactical nuclear forces held well back under a separate chain of command and capable of the conventional as well as the nuclear role, which would in fact reassure the world.

In order to gain so great an advantage, both for ourselves and for the world, it would be sensible to pay a price. And, no doubt, such a NATO policy would, like all other alternative policies, involve disadvantages. The principal disadvantage which is usually urged against such a policy is that it "offers the Russians the option of conventional war." It can be argued, therefore, that it increases the risk of conventional war, while decreasing the risk of nuclear war. Indeed, it has been suggested that a sort of scale exists on which it is possible by moving in one direction to decrease the risk of war of any kind breaking out, but only at the cost of increasing the catastrophic character of the war if it does nevertheless break out. If it is considered desirable to do this, one will weaken one's conventional forces and strengthen one's nuclear forces, so that the enemy will perceive that should he commit even a limited act of aggression, the response must be nuclear. Then the dread of a nuclear response will, it is hoped, deter him from moving at all. The weakness of this position is of course that the enemy may appreciate that, on the contrary, since we have debarred ourselves from responding to even a limited challenge except by nuclear means, we shall not in fact respond at all. By moving along the scale in the opposite direction we may, it is suggested, decrease the catastrophic character of any war which may break out, but only at the cost of increasing the risk of the outbreak. If we choose this option we shall, as advocated above, strengthen our conventional forces relatively to our nuclear forces. This, it is objected, will decrease the deterrence which we are exercising upon the enemy because it will indicate to him that if he makes a limited move he is incurring the risk of a conventional response alone, instead of a nuclear holocaust.

At first sight it may seem difficult to decide in which direction along the scale it is desirable to move. But, in fact, there is a cogent reason for believing that it is in the interests both of the West and of peace to move in the direction of strengthening the conventional forces. The decisive consideration is that it is, in present circumstances, probably fallacious to suppose that the deterrent effect upon the Russians will be decreased, on balance, by indicating by our posture that we should respond conventionally to a conventional challenge. It is true that this is a much lesser threat; but then, on the other hand, there is a far greater probability of our actually carrying it out! The net deterrent effect may well gain more by way of credibility than it loses by way of terror. If I were to sum up the whole argument in a sentence I should say that there is no substitute for adequate conventional strength. To suppose that there is will be likely to prove, in practice, a recipe for piecemeal capitulation to demands which will be kept well below the level at which resort to the nuclear deterrent is credible.

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Michael Howard

Bombing and The Bomb

LAST AUTUMN the Stationery Office published, in four fat and handsome volumes, the Official History of the Bomber Offensive in the Second World War.[1] Reviewers on the whole were less interested in the massive scholarship of this work than in the controversial nature of its conclusions; and a number of senior officers who should have known better rushed into print to express violent opinions based at best on misunderstanding of the book and more often on simple and inaccurate hearsay. The polite but crushing rejoinders of the surviving author, Noble Frankland, and the opportunity to read the entire work at leisure undisturbed by telephone-calls from Fleet Street, has either reduced these critics to silence or forced them to mature better-founded attacks.

But some controversy was inevitable, and the editors of the series must have known it when they selected the formidably pugnacious Sir Charles Webster to take charge of the work. Behind almost every major decision relating to the air attack against Nazi Germany there lay prolonged conflicts of opinion, the more bitter in that they had to be conducted in deepest secrecy. There was the whole question of the role and mission of the Royal Air Force itself between the wars, and the amount of money to be spent on it at the expense of the senior services. There was the balance to be struck between offensive bomber and defensive fighter capacity. There were the conflicting claims of the bomber offensive against Germany, the Battle of the Atlantic, and close support for ground operations. There were disputes over the most effective target systems to attack—oil, transportation, the aircraft industry, or civilian morale. Decisions on these questions, like all military decisions, had to be made rapidly, if not hastily, on the basis of evidence known to be inadequate, and historians will debate endlessly whether or not they were right. Certainly the protagonists, determined and able men who did not win their way to the top of their professions by suave self-effacement, do not regard the issues as closed, and they are likely to express themselves the more violently for having been compelled, through loyal discretion, to remain silent for so long.

THIS IS ALL intensely interesting, not only for professional historians, but for all whose destinies were shaped by the outcome of these controversies. This interest in itself would justify the labours which have gone into the book; and to try to set its conclusions in a wider context and use it as a tool in a type of intellectual enquiry even more ambitious and complex than that which its authors conducted may be unwise. It is perhaps only an idiosyncratic itch which leads me to do anything of the kind, and one better not scratched in public. Webster and Frankland should no doubt be left as a monument of Second World War historiography rather than examined for some light on our present discontents, in an effort to link the bombing with The Bomb. Perhaps the vast politico-technological problem comprised in the words "The Bomb" is best left to politicians, technologists, and military analysts to solve, uncomplicated by the irrelevant intrusions of historians. On the other hand, if it is a matter of all hands to the pumps, the contributions of the historian are no more irrelevant than those of anybody else to a predicament which is as unique as it is dangerous for mankind: in which academic caution, if maintained for too long, becomes slothful timidity.

[1] *Strategic Air Offensive against Germany*. Four volumes—Volume 1: Preparation (42s.); Volume 2: Endeavour (42s.); Volume 3: Victory (42s.); Volume 4: Annexes and Appendices (42s.). Published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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In any case, Webster and Frankland trace for us, in their history of thinking about air warfare, a pattern which it is tempting to extrapolate. Air Power was preached by its early apostles, Viscount Trenchard foremost among them, as the solution to the deadlock to which war seemed to be reduced in 1914–18, when the capacity of industrial nations to raise, arm, and transport vast armies to the battlefield had been equalled only by the capacity of forces dug in behind field-fortifications and armed with machine-guns to slaughter them. Victory in that war came ultimately not through Napoleonic triumphs in the field but through the collapse of whole nations strained beyond endurance: a collapse, incidentally, almost as disastrous to the victors as to the vanquished. But if the ultimate objective was not the enemy's armed forces but the morale of his people, why attack his armed forces at all? In 1870 the German invaders of France had decided that the quickest, and ultimately the most humane way to reduce French fortresses was to bombard not the fortifications but the civil population so that they themselves compelled the garrison to surrender. *Mutatis mutandis* the apostles of Air Power advocated the same thing. The development of flight laid the whole of belligerent territory open to attack. Air Power opened a new world, free from the sterile slaughters of generals and the antiquated obsessions of admirals. It could be used with surgical precision in conflicts which, however painful, would be brief and effective. The Air Forces appealed to the young and adventurous as armies with the record of 1914–18 behind them could never appeal. The *Luftwaffe* was the cherished darling of Hitler's new order; the Royal Air Force in the 30's attracted intelligent young men who had read Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon and who were determined to escape at least that kind of war. The Air Forces of the world believed that they could do great things, if only they were given the money and the equipment to do them with.

THE FIRST GREAT THING which the Royal Air Force did was to win one of the decisive battles of history in the Battle of Britain. But that victory could hardly have been more ironical. The guiding faith which had inspired Trenchard in his creation of the Force was that the bomber would, and must, always get through, and that air defence was not only useless but a positive drawback in that it weakened the forces which could be deployed in attacking the enemy. The civilian population, in the words of Giulio Douhet, must submit to the attacks which the enemy inflicted on it until the enemy forces had been destroyed at their sources and that "Command of the Air" secured which was, like Command of the Sea, indivisible and the truest defence. A natural civilian reluctance to submit to anything of the sort led to the Air Staff being overruled before the war, and resources being devoted to home defence which made possible the perfection of fighter aircraft and radar devices: developments which invalidated all the assumptions on which Trenchard, and other airmen throughout the world, had worked. The cheering image which the R.A.F. built up for itself in the eyes of the public in 1940, of a handful of stubborn heroes successfully defending the skies and shores of their homeland against the hordes of an all-conquering invader, was very different from the role which its Founding Fathers had planned; and the outcome of the Battle of Britain presaged an air war very different from any they had expected. The very name of that engagement revealed that Air Power had not rendered battles obsolete: it had only changed their nature and location. An industrial nation subjected to air attack could still provide itself with such effective defences, aided by all the resources of science, deployed with skill, and manned by resolute men, that it could inflict on the attackers a rate of loss above their capacity in aircraft and trained man-power to sustain. Once Command of the Air was achieved it could certainly be used against the enemy vitals with surgical precision. But it could be achieved only by a process of attrition almost as heart-breaking as that of 1914–18, from which the airmen hoped they had escaped for good.

THE AIR WAR between 1939 and 1945 was thus, as Dr. Frankland has pointed out in a recent authoritative lecture, not revolutionary, but classical in its conduct. The chiefs of Bomber Command had to develop the qualities—acquiring sometimes almost the physical image, as one can see from their photographs—of the generals of the First World War. They had to remain stubbornly convinced, in the face of tragic losses, that they were inflicting greater damage on the enemy than they were suffering themselves. Like Sir Douglas Haig and his

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staff in 1916–17, Sir Arthur Harris had no doubt whatever that under a few more blows German morale would, without any question, collapse. And they had to sustain the morale of men whom they were subjecting night after night to an ordeal which they could not share themselves. The Bomber Offensive, indeed, has been described as the Passchendaele of the Second World War.

We can now see, with all the advantage of hindsight, how wrong they often were in their assessment of the damage they were doing to the enemy. But we can also see that there was no short-cut to victory through Air Power. Webster and Frankland suggest plausibly that if Sir Arthur Harris had obeyed Air Staff directives more meticulously during the last half of 1944 the war might have been shortened by a few months; but that is all. The *Luftwaffe* had to be beaten out of the German skies, as the Royal Air Force would have had to be beaten out of British skies, before "Command of the Air" was won, and it fought back with no less heroism and ingenuity than had its British counterpart.

Air Power, in fact, had not transformed the existing pattern of war: it had conformed to it, with remarkable and depressing precision.

THEN CAME THE BOMB. To the eye of the laymen, Hiroshima and Nagasaki seemed only a continuation or at most a culmination, of all that had gone before. There was little discontinuity between the raids on Hamburg in 1943 which had killed 42,000, the great fire-raids on Tokyo in March 1945 which had killed 84,000, and Hiroshima where 71,000 died. It is only in retrospect that the Hiroshima and Nagasaki raids seem to rear themselves as ugly and isolated acts, like Easter Island images, inexplicable without the preliminary scaffolding which made their erection possible. Yet for the experts on Air Power these raids were truly revolutionary. The damage done by their predecessors had been possible only at a gruelling, possibly an excessive cost, and it had been wreaked by forces of a size which could only be sustained by nations which had geared all their resources to total war. Now all was changed. The vital factor of attrition was greatly reduced. To inflict crippling damage on an adversary it was no longer necessary to send massive and expensive fleets of bombers, night after night, with a high and constant rate of losses, until his defences were worn down and his cities lay at one's mercy. Now it was enough that a handful of aircraft should get through, and in dropping their bombs they had no need for meticulous accuracy. All the old targets which had competed for attention—oil, transportation, heavy industry, civilian morale—could be shattered in a single attack. Perhaps Trenchard and Douhet had been premature and hailed a false dawn: so much could certainly be argued from the coldly deflating assessments of actual damage done to Germany by the allied bombers which were published by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey after the war. But what they had prophesied for the nineteen-twenties must now, thirty years later, surely come true?

SO IN SPITE OF their disappointments in the Second World War, the advocates of Air Power seemed, at the beginning of the 1950s, to have emerged supreme. In America, the United States Air Force secured not only independence from, but for a time, dominance over the other two services. For an impoverished and overburdened Britain, the continued development of a bomber force and the creation of an independent nuclear capacity appeared to be, not an additional and unnecessary luxury, but the most economical way of maintaining her influence in the world and helping to restrain aggression. For officers brought up in the tradition of Admiral Mahan, to believe that the peace of the world in the 19th century had been a *Pax Britannica* resting on the Royal Navy's command of the seas, the creation of a new kind of fleet of the air, as dedicated to peaceful purposes as its naval predecessor, ever ready to visit instant and condign punishment on any transgressor, naturally seemed the most effective and economical way of keeping the peace. Bomber Command and, even more, the United States Strategic Air Command, learned to regard themselves as forces devoted to the maintenance of peace and law. But for their constant alertness, their whole-hearted and unwearying attention to their tedious, complicated, and awe-inspiring duties, the world, they believed, would collapse in barbarism and disorder, or else fall prey to an all-conquering Communist terror.

The further technical developments of the 'fifties seemed likely at first to reinforce all these assumptions. The thermo-nuclear bomb, a thousand times more destructive than the

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atomic weapon, eliminated the problem of attrition altogether. One aircraft could now carry a greater explosive power than all the bombs dropped on Germany during the Second World War. Air defence was still possible—indeed the development of supersonic fighter aircraft and of ground-to-air homing missiles had vastly improved its potentialities—but 100 per cent effective defence had never been considered feasible, and now failure by a margin even of 1 per cent was catastrophic. Civilians were once again adjured—in Britain by Mr. Duncan Sandys in 1957 and 1958—that they had to submit to the damage which an attacker could inflict on them while his war-making power was being destroyed at its roots. Then the ballistic missile, to which no counter has yet been developed, made delivery yet more inescapable. To Atlas, Thor, Polaris, or Minuteman, once they were launched, there seemed no more defence than against a bullet in flight. In the Second World War it had taken Britain and the United States four laborious years and an infinity of expenditure before they attained the position of having their adversary at their mercy. Today we are in that position in the middle of profoundest peace. And so, incidentally, is he.

THIS, we may assume, is not quite the situation which the apostles of Air Power foresaw. For in fact the two technical developments noted above affected the situation very considerably. In the first place, the bland request that civilians should submit with resignation to the damage which the opposing bomber force could inflict on them was even less acceptable in the thermo-nuclear age than it had been in the 1930s; and as we have seen, they were reluctant to submit even then. It was one thing to endure ordeal by high explosive which, however much damage and suffering it might cause, still left the basic structure of society intact. It was, and is, another to look forward to the total destruction of one's civilisation—*pace* Mr. Herman Kahn, I speak now in a British context—beyond hope, so far as one can see, of repair; with the consolation only that the adversary is simultaneously being annihilated as well.

The difference between damage on a thermo-nuclear scale and that experienced during the last war is qualitative and not quantitative, and the moral and political justifications either for inflicting or for suffering it which applied then are no longer likely to be valid. It is sometimes necessary for societies to suffer—and perhaps suffer agonisingly—if they are to survive and grow; and if they flinch from such suffering, their chances of survival are small. But it can never make sense for them, in Bismarck's words, to commit suicide for fear of death.

All this is incontestable. But it is equally incontestable that we still live in a world of sovereign states, and that a world of sovereign states is a world of power politics, and that we must survive in this element until we are wise enough to create an effective world authority or weak enough to acquiesce in some universal world empire. Peace is not simply a matter of repressing "aggression" but of stabilising and constantly adjusting the balance of power, and among the constituent factors which make up political power, weapons still play a not unimportant part. The balance of nuclear terror may seem a terrifying basis for peace; but the only alternative basis, short of the multilateral disarmament for which we are striving, would be the self-restraint of a Power with a monopoly of nuclear weapons which it could use without fear of retaliation. In such a world, sovereign states would be likely to become absorbed into a universal Empire; and even if we in Britain—or even we in the West—were prepared to acquiesce, there are other powers less self-effacing, who would be unlikely to follow suit.

PEACE THUS RESTS on a balance of deterrence, and about that balance much has been written—not least in the pages of ENCOUNTER[2]—and need not be repeated here. That the balance should be so far as possible constant through the spectrum of weapons, conventional and nuclear, and that it should be rendered as stable as may be by increasing reliance on second-strike forces seems to-day generally accepted, outside the British War Office. That such a balance might still, in strict logic, be vulnerable to an aggressor who was prepared to accept a few score million casualties as the inescapable penalty of launching a surprise attack

[2] Cf. P. M. S. Blackett, "Critique of Some Contemporary Defence Thinking," ENCOUNTER, April 1961; Alastair Buchan, "A World With Arms Without War," February 1961 and "P. M. S. Blackett and War," August 1961; Michael Howard, "Arms Races and War," January 1961; Oskar Morgenstern, "Nuclear Stalemate?" June 1961.

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has been brilliantly argued by Albert Wohlstetter and Herman Kahn;[3] but their logic is generally considered—in this country at least—to be that of war-gaming and not of political life. Finally, it is increasingly recognised that the maintenance of the balance is an essential condition of any measures of multilateral disarmament; a problem which, with the best will in the world, no expert has yet been able to solve. The Americans will not disarm without the assurance given by international inspection that the Russians are doing the same; while the Russians will not accept an inspection which would reveal the whereabouts of their launching sites and airfields to a conceivable surprise attack. This is the situation with which at present we have to deal.

BUT THERE are two elements in this situation which it is worth noting here. The first is that the concept of "balance" is something new in thinking about Air Power, and reflects a more realistic appreciation of the nature of political life than did the concept, which it replaced of simple "deterrence." It is not in the nature of Great Powers to acquiesce in the monopoly by their rivals of a major military weapon, if they are in a position to acquire it themselves. Even if Mahan was right in attributing the *Pax Britannica* to the Royal Navy's command of the sea—and it may be doubted whether this time-honoured belief would really stand up to critical examination—the immediate consequence of his analysis was to create a determination on the part of his own countrymen, and even more on the part of the Germans, not to remain thus dependent on the mastery of a foreign power, be it never so moderately exercised, for a moment longer than necessary. A Great Power, however selfless its policy—and has a Great Power any *business* to be selfless?—cannot gain acceptance among its rivals, except in very limited circumstances, as an international policeman, on whose self-restraint and wisdom all will rely. No responsible Russian statesmen, whatever his political creed, could accept as stable a situation in which S.A.C. bases threatened his country with instantaneous destruction from which no escape, and for which no retaliation, was possible; and no Russian statesman could be expected to believe that this force would be used only in generally-accepted interests of world order and peace.

It takes at least two to keep the peace through air power, and only when they themselves threatened the West with comparably great and inescapable punishment for aggression could the Russians begin to feel, on their part, that the peace of the world was tolerably secure. To-day the Russian and the Western deterrent forces are not so much rivals as colleagues, twin caryatids sustaining with great labour, boredom, and discomfort the edifice of international security within which political commerce—which includes limited and ideological conflict as well as more peaceful pursuits—continues to be carried on.

THE OTHER ELEMENT in the situation is this. The existence of national armed forces in a reasonable state of alertness, backed by an adequate military potential, has always been a vital factor in international relations. There is nothing new about military balance and mutual deterrence. But hitherto this military strength has consisted of *fighting* forces: troops capable of encountering and overcoming each other in battle, trained, disciplined, and organised for war. The whole *raison d'être* of the elaborate military machine, with its hierarchy, its uniforms, its special laws and privileges and customs, was that it had to fight. The battle was, ultimately, the pay-off. But what if there is no battle? Here lay the central paradox of the Royal Air Force. It was moulded as a military force, hierarchic and traditional, borrowing all the panache and display of its elder colleagues. It was just as well that it was, for as we have seen it had to endure ordeals by battle which would have broken men not subjected to military authority and strengthened by traditional disciplines and *esprit de corps*. Yet these battles were unexpected. The Royal Air Force was certainly not moulded in the expectation that it would have to fight them; enemy fighter and ground defences were regarded almost as negligible elements in the obtaining of Command of the Air. If the prophets of Air Power had been right, need the Royal Air Force have been a military body at all—or at least any more military than the police? And if they are belatedly right, now, what are the conclusions which we should draw?

[3] *On Thermo-Nuclear War*, by Herman Kahn (O.U.P.). *The Delicate Balance of Terror*, by Albert Wohlstetter. *Foreign Affairs*, January 1959.

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THE PROBLEM OF DETERRENCE has grown out of traditional and historic military problems, as I have been trying to show. The time may not be far off, however, when it will outgrow them altogether: when its difficulties will be purely technical and political, with very little military content; very little, that is, of tactics and strategy left at all. Increasingly during and since the Second World War the struggle for mastery has been transferred from the battlefields of the land, sea, and air, to the laboratories and factory work-benches. The object was originally to ensure that when the opposing forces met in battle, one's own side should suffer no inferiority in weapons. Military discipline and skills were no less necessary to conduct the battles themselves. Now skills and disciplines will continue to be necessary: ones which will stretch human ingenuity and self-sacrifice to the limits. But will they be military ones?

The command of a bomber-force may be self-evidently a military affair, but the command of a missile-base is a different matter. *Polaris*-carrying submarines may be undeniably naval craft, but what of freight-cars carrying *Minutemen*? This is not to suggest that the operations of such installations could easily be left to purely civilian services; though the effectiveness with which the Merchant Navy and commercial airlines carry out their arduous and often dangerous duties suggests that this idea is less ludicrous than it may at first appear. But it *is* to suggest that their role is quite as distinct from military operations as is that of the police, and the time may not be far distant when this distinction should be made institutional.

Like the police, their function would overlap with the military, and as with the police one would expect close co-operation and interchange of personnel. But also like the police their duty is the non-military one of keeping the peace, and not of fighting wars; like the police their discipline and traditions must be based, not on martial virtues, but on deep political wisdom and self-restraint; and finally, like the police, they need to be securely under civilian control.

SUCH A SEPARATION of the "deterrent" from the fighting forces, if it were to come about, would not only be natural: it would carry with it certain very definite practical advantages. So long as sovereign states exist in a condition of international anarchy, so long are armed conflicts likely to occur, and military forces be kept on foot to conduct them. But that such conflicts should, in a thermo-nuclear age, be kept strictly limited both in their objectives and in their mode of conduct, is a platitude so obvious that it hardly bears stating. The West would have been prepared to devote a great deal of blood and treasure to saving South Korea from Communist conquest, and the Communists were prepared to spend much to conquer it; but nuclear annihilation, even if it had been mutual, was not a price that either side was prepared to pay.

It is reasonable, if pessimistic, to look forward to the recurrence of such conflicts, either as the result of deliberate policy or of miscalculation; and it is equally reasonable to emphasise that the qualities required to conduct these conflicts successfully, the traditional military skills and virtues, are not necessarily the qualities which are desirable in those who control the strategic deterrent, and that it is particularly desirable when such limited wars are in progress that their control and the control of the deterrent should, under the sovereign power, be in different hands. It is not so much that this would reduce the danger of accident and error of judgment: it is that it would be *seen* to reduce it.

The claim made by the British, that our V-bomber force is a dual-purpose weapon equally effective in a nuclear or in a conventional role, is a slightly disquieting one; for if the aircraft were prepared for action in a limited war, the adversary might mistakenly believe that they were intending a nuclear strike and react accordingly. We do not boast that the Metropolitan Police can be used in a military role: if they can, the Home Office wisely keeps quiet about it. Nor are those qualities of belligerence, resolution, and deep knowledge of military affairs, at first hand and through study, which characterise the military leader to whom a nation entrusts the conduct of its armed forces, necessarily accompanied by the restraint, the diplomatic experience and the political *coup d'œil* needed for those who control its deterrent.

Such a separation of deterrent and fighting forces would at least provide an additional brake on a mechanism which threatens us all with destruction.

FINALLY, although the strategic deterrent forces are likely to become increasingly non-military, the technical expertise which they demand is very closely allied to the technical knowledge

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needed for their control and abolition. We are at last beginning, however slowly, to outgrow the sterile epoch when military specialists and disarmament experts were aligned in hostile camps, knowing little of each other's problems and caring less. We still cling to certain archaic principles: that disarmament, for instance, should be controlled by one ministry and defence by another, that defence-specialists can veto disarmament proposals while disarmament authorities are not consulted over military developments. But the realisation is growing that defence and disarmament are indivisible, dual aspects of the single problem of national security, and that if the maintenance of balanced deterrence is an indispensable element in multilateral disarmament, the progressive stages of that disarmament and probably its subsequent enforcement must be worked out in close consultation with those forces on whom the balance depends. The deterrent forces in fact have at least as much in common with disarmament authorities, and with those who will eventually be responsible for inspection and control, as they have with traditional forces responsible for orthodox military action. It will be from their ranks that any international inspectorate is likely to be recruited; and it will be on them, eventually, that the survival of world order is likely to depend.

THE LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT would therefore seem that deterrent and disarmament forces should ultimately come together under a single authority, distinct from the Ministry, or the Department, of Defence; leaving to the latter the organisation of armed forces and the conduct of limited wars. But there is nothing logical about political developments, and service opposition combined with civilian parsimony is likely to make anything of the sort unlikely for many years. Still it is worth thinking along these lines. It would be the natural conclusion of Trenchard's doctrine of Air Power. He and his disciples might be surprised if they had survived to see it happen; but they might also feel satisfied, that it should after all be their direct successors who were charged with keeping the peace.

Philosophy

There is a place to which I often go,
Not by planning to, but by a flow
Away from all existence, to a cold
Lucidity, whose will is uncontrolled.
Here, the mills of God are hardly slow.

The landscape in its geologic prime
Dissolves to show its quintessential slime.
A million stars are blotted out. I think
Of each historic passion as a blink
That happened to the sad eye of Time.

But residues of meaning still remain,
As darkest myths meander through the pain
Towards a final formula of light.
I, too, reject that clarity of sight;
What cannot be explained, do not explain.

The mundane language of the senses sings
Its own interpretations. Common things
Become, by virtue of their commonness,
An argument against the nakedness
That dies of cold to find what truth it brings.

Nissim Ezekiel

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Elliott Felkin

Days with Thomas Hardy

From a 1918–1919 Diary

October 21st, 1918

TEA with the Hardys—Mrs. Hardy and a man called McDougall and his wife, the author of a book just published on "Realism," and myself. Thomas Hardy in better spirits than last time and amazingly lively, interested and interesting. A long discussion arising out of McDougall's book on whether there could be such a thing as scientific treatment in a novel. Hardy said that all imaginative work was events seen through a temperament. That unconscious or conscious selection by the personality of the author must colour the work. I instanced Flaubert as a man who attempted to get at events in themselves but who so definitely had a point of view—and McDougall, who has apparently made a study of Flaubert in his book, agreed. Hardy said he found from experience that one could suppress one's feelings deliberately, but even so one knew that one was still exaggerating personality in the selection of what was significant, in fact that what was to anyone significant was a kind of projection of personality. McDougall said he supposed that the difference between Art and Life was that in Art one always was selecting, while in Life one had to take what came along.

A LONG TALK with Hardy later. He had been routing out old papers and found reviews in German papers of his work which it was odd to read now they were enemies. Talked a lot about dreams, and I told him of Jung. He said he dreamt so much and it was all stupid and unrelated, and that it must be a great strain on one, as one woke up so excited.

Talking about Lytton Strachey's book, he said that Lytton Strachey had reviewed a book of his years ago and had picked out the two worst lines in it (poems), which was not the way to review. Spoke most interestingly of writing and how one created a lot subconsciously, so that in reviews afterwards one was surprised to see quoted this or that sentence, and never realised that one had written it. I explained Jung's theory of dreams and the unconscious and complexes, and Mrs. Hardy said how nice it would be to go to a doctor and have good qualities given one. Hardy said "Yes, you would go and you would say 'I find I am not as courageous as I was; would you lay on a little for me,'" and quoted the remark of a man—"I wanted to run away but my legs would not let me," with that amusing ironical smile.... He said how often reviewers hit on your own ideas and reproduced them as their own. He had written a story with the idea how so much tragedy was grotesque, and the reviewer, struck by the same idea, had written a long essay saying how tragedy was nothing but grotesque.

Talked a little with the McDougalls about Forster, Arthur Waley, Goldie [Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson], and Monty James, from

In 1918 Elliott Felkin was a young temporary officer on the staff of the Prisoners of War Camp at Dorchester. He was given an introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Hardy by Lowes Dickinson and was made welcome at Max Gate. He says he was part of Mr. and Mrs. Hardy's contribution to the war effort.

The following extracts from his contemporary journal are unchanged save for the omission of one name. The sketches are by Thomas Hardy from Wessex Poems, *published by Macmillan & Co.*

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whom Hardy has had an invitation to Eton; said Monty had written him quite an ordinary letter and here he had always thought that provosts were a little greater than deans and just below bishops.

HARDY WALKED a little way with me—extraordinarily active. Talking about Lytton Strachey's book, Mrs. Hardy said she did not like his putting in that Gordon drank, as so often a man could not help that. I disagreed, said it was an important fact which should be known about a man, and we had another argument. Hardy said that it was a good thing from the point of view of anyone else reading the life, but one would not like the man who did it, which seemed to me odd. I dared to say the *way* he did it might be offensive or not. Hardy said that they had had a consultation before Swinburne's life was written whether a lot of things should be put in, "wildness of his youth," and he was glad that Gosse had omitted them.

June 25th, 1919

HARDY on Sunday said that he liked owls; they were such philosophical birds; fell into chimneys and forgot where they were and so did not get away before a fire was lit and they were burned.

June 30th, 1919

MAX GATE yesterday. —— was not there and we had as usual a delightful tea with Hardy and Mrs. Hardy alone. Hardy in a very good temper and in *déshabille*, a sort of short dressing-gown. Afterwards we walked through the town so that I might see them safely into church and make sure that they went. He explained on the way that he supposed people thought he went to church because he believed in it, which he did not, but went because it was good for the people to get clean and come together once a week—like discipline in the army. He said of George Eliot that she was not a story-teller, and he would range her with Goethe and Kant rather than with Shakespeare or Sophocles. (I'd quoted Acton's opinion.) He said she was such a neglected writer.

I asked him what the big house standing back on the road was, and he said it was Henchard's house in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. At the time there was a hot-headed town clerk in Dorchester called Giles, and he nearly called Henchard Giles, and then it struck him how awful it would be and everyone would think he intended the town clerk, so he changed it to Henchard. Mrs. Hardy said Henchard suited better.

Hardy said that at one time he had as a youth all sorts of writings and then he got a clear handwriting by making as few strokes as possible in order to make each letter recognisable.

HARDY SAID in his youth he used to preach sermons. As an architect's pupil he often had to go to church openings. Once he went to the opening of a new church near here and had no money left (he was earning none as an articled clerk), and he was put right in front. The collection bag came to him first and he could put nothing in, while his friend had to put in his last shilling. At the same opening another contretemps happened. An old lady outside got caught in the wind and her umbrella was turned inside out, at which they laughed. She turned out to be the chief contributor to the funds!

He lent me Mr. Lee's book about his works and drew my attention to some notes he had made in the beginning for future use and thought that he did not want them seen.

Hardy certainly illustrated his theory on the way to church. He had on a light grey felt hat, lightish blue tie and new dark grey cotton gloves.

He said that great ladies, *e.g.*, Lady Portsmouth, had so often told him that they longed to get out of the racket of a London society whirl to a quiet and simple life. But he supposed they perhaps only said it to please him.

Of Browning he said that he used to come in to Mrs. Procter and talk social backchat and gossip in an ordinary way "as if he did not at all know what life was really like, like the butcher's son." He hazarded the theory that Browning wrote *Easter Eve*, etc., in order to make his book sell.

He takes a delightful view of Meredith.* "He goes on all right and then just when he might put in a touch of pathos he doesn't do it. I wonder he didn't know better." And on another occasion—"Meredith's characters are like flowers in a garden. But when you come to look at them closely you see that they are all made of jewels; *they never fade*."

* In one of Meredith's letters (late) he says Hardy had been to see him and he was pleased because he both liked him and shared his "twilight view of life."

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no sense political, but intensely philosophical; everything in it turns upon, embodies, or illustrates, Sartre's theoretical ideas; it is the *pur sang* of the existentialist novel. It is also one of the pinnacles of his achievement, an extraordinarily good book.[1] It is cast in the form of the diary of one Antoine Roquentin, who is living in the Norman port of Bouville, working on the biography of an 18th-century worthy, the Marquis de Rollebon, whose papers are conserved in that place. Roquentin, we might fancy, is a remarkably free man. He is thirty and has a modest private income; no family, no job, none of the so-called "ties." He has travelled widely, and can live where he pleases. "Free" we may want to call him, but it is a part of the argument of the book that Roquentin is not really free. He is merely *dégagé* or uncommitted; and it is one of Sartre's central beliefs that *dégagement* is only a mockery of freedom, is, indeed, a form of running away from freedom.

Manifestly Roquentin is not happy (the original title of the novel was *Melancholia*). He has no friends; nobody writes to him; his only conversation is with casual acquaintances. His sex life is limited to pleasuring, without much enthusiasm, the patronne of the *café* he frequents. His days are passed in a kind of dull depression, with intermittent spasms of nausea, vertigo, anxiety, and other forms of nervous tension which, in the Sartrian universe, are not so much symptoms of psychological disorder as intimations of metaphysical reality.

The world becomes increasingly unbearable to Roquentin; and the more unbearable it is to him, the closer (according to Sartre) he is to its true nature. Roquentin feels objects touching him "as if they were alive," "as if they were living creatures." Material objects appear to him as gluey, sticky, viscous. They are all unnecessary, superfluous, "in the way": they "inconvenience" him. Human beings equally are superfluous: the same is true of himself: "And I—soft, weak, obscene, digesting, juggling with dismal thoughts—I, too, was in the way."

In what sense is Roquentin's uneasiness metaphysical? The fact is that he yearns for the universe to be a harmonious machine as it is in the cosmology of Newton or Leibniz. Where everything was rational, ordered, predictable; where everything was necessary, and had a purpose; where was a God presiding over all things and a Moral Law demonstrable to all men; where the laws of science were immutable —there, and there alone, would Roquentin feel at ease. This metaphysical malaise is as much the author's as his hero's.

Roquentin begins by assuming that the universe must really be as he wishes it to be: a rational whole, in which the existence of everything is somehow necessary. In the heightened awareness of his "Nausea," he realises that this is not so. Existence, he discovers, is not an abstract category: it is the "very paste of things." The sticky, unformed, half-solid, half-liquid mess which is the physical world as he sees it—this "paste" alone is reality: there is no higher order of being. One day Roquentin is in a public park gazing at the black root of a chestnut tree. Its blackness, as he perceives it, is not just a colour, it is also "like a bruise or a secretion, like an oozing—and something else, an odour, for example, of wet earth" or "a flavour of chewed, sweet, fibre." As he gazes thus at the root, Roquentin feels himself "plunged into a horrible ecstasy" and it is just then that he understands what his Nausea signifies, and hence what existence is. It strikes him "that the crucial point is *contingency*. I mean that one cannot define existence as necessary. To exist is simply *to be there*."

Some people may well ask at this point: what is all the fuss about? After all, Roquentin's dramatic discovery that the world is contingent is one that could have been made by any reader of David Hume in the 18th century or after. It amounts to more than the realisation that Newton was wrong. The laws of science—or of Nature—are not iron laws. The future is not certain to be like the past. In Nature we observe regularities but there is no necessary link between causes and effects. The laws of science are not analytically true, like the laws of mathematics and logic. They are based on statistical uniformities. Because they are contingent they are sometimes mistaken, and have to be revised.

In all this one may fail to see any reason for excitement, let alone for "horrible ecstasy." But if one feels this, one may not appreciate the predicament of Roquentin—or of Sartre. Roquentin is a man to whom questions of metaphysics are questions of life and death. In a universe whose laws are contingent he has no security. He says to himself, "If this is so, my tongue may turn into a centipede." In thinking thus, he is plainly giving way to an anxious imagination. Theoretically, everything may be "possible" in a universe which is not governed by necessary laws; but in a universe which moves in an intelligible and regular way, where scientific laws are, if only "probable," nevertheless reliable, it is a wildly

[1] Translated by Lloyd Alexander, it will be published under the title *Nausea* by Hamish Hamilton.

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fantastic, even a pathologically morbid thought, that "my tongue may turn into a centipede."

AND YET to raise this objection is perhaps to speak too readily in the language of common sense, or rationalism, or the Enlightenment. The mentality of existentialism belongs to another and altogether more emotional order, to Romanticism, and indeed historically, to religion. The first existentialist, Kierkegaard, was a passionate Christian, and it was the purpose of his existentialism to suggest that the proof of Christian teaching could never be found in rational arguments but only in the lonely anguish of the sinner separated from God. There are many Christians for whom the thought of living in a universe without a heavenly father is an unthinkable, a terrifying thought. The condition of Roquentin is akin to theirs. Sartre is an atheist who understands nothing better than man's thirst for God; and whose lesson is that men must learn to live with that thirst for ever unsatisfied.

In a lecture entitled *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (1945) Sartre said:

> The existentialist is strongly opposed to a certain type of secular moralism which seeks to suppress God at the least possible expense. Towards 1880, when the French professors endeavoured to formulate a secular morality, they said something like this—"God is a useless and costly hypothesis, so we will do without it. . . . Nothing will be changed if God does not exist; we shall rediscover the same norms of honesty, progress, and humanity, and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself." The existentialist, on the other hand, finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist; for there disappears with him all possibility of finding values in an invisible heaven. There can no longer be any good *a priori*. . . .

This profound sense of the absence of God lies at the heart of Sartre's philosophy. It is the explanation of Roquentin's "abandonment," his "solitude" and his "dread." However, once Roquentin has learned to brace himself to bear this anguish, to face the truth that he lives in a Godless and unNewtonian universe, he discovers one great, and bracing, reward. If the universe is contingent, it is also free. The future is open. No one is the slave of the past. "All is free," he tells himself, "this park, this city, and myself."

Here we meet another of Sartre's most recurrent arguments. Man is free. Determinism is false. Hence, precisely because man is free, it follows that he is answerable for everything he is and does. He is not just a cog in a machine, a creature of circumstance or of destiny, a puppet or a robot: he is what he makes himself; and for what he makes himself he alone is responsible. That is why *dégagement*, or the refusal to accept responsibility, is a denial of freedom for Sartre, not an affirmation of it. Responsibility cannot, in any case, be eluded. People who try to evade it deceive themselves: they are guilty of what Sartre calls bad faith. The history of Roquentin in *La Nausée* is that of a man passing from self-deception to at least the beginnings of self-knowledge.

We might fancy that little could happen in the space of a narrative as short as that of *La Nausée*, but Sartre is an avowed believer in what he calls "conversion." Roquentin's "conversion" comes when he sees how he might give himself a "reason for living." It follows from the contingency of the universe—or the "absurdity" of the universe as Sartre sometimes expresses it—that no "reason for living" is given one by God or Nature. Every man must make his own "reason for living." Roquentin finds his in literature. One day he is listening to an American jazz record, and he imagines a Jewish musician in a hot New York apartment finding a reason for living by creating this simple little tune. Roquentin asks, "if him, why not I?" His own talent is for writing. But he tells himself it is no good going on writing biographies: because that is simply to lose one's own being in another's, and "one existent can never justify the existence of another." No, it will have to be *creative* literature: and Roquentin decides to write a novel. It would not be easy, but he reflects,

> a time would come when it would be written, when it would be behind me, and I think that a little of its clarity might fall over my own past. Then perhaps because of it, I could remember my life without repugnance.

La Nausée thus ends on a distinct note of hope: and the source of that hope is the notion of salvation through art. And one can easily see why this idea should appeal to Sartre. In art one creates a world which has what the real world has not. Order, harmony, predictability; the organising genius of a rational creator—all the characteristics which are wanting—for Sartre, painfully wanting—in the real universe, are present in the work of art. Art promises salvation because it offers an escape from the sensible world of contingency into a created world of necessity. Even so, Sartre did not long remain content with this idea of salvation through art.

LA NAUSEE was published in 1938, and was one of the most successful novels of the year. (It is not the case, as is often thought in England, that Sartre first made his name in the war years.) His short stories attracted no less

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attention. Some of these are distinctly sensational. Sartre himself said to his first editor Paulhan, *"Elles sont un peu—heuh, heuh, libres. Je touche aux questions en quelque sorte sexuelles."* Even the carefully Bowdlerised English translation was described by one impressionable reviewer as having "left Lady Chatterley asleep at the post." Perhaps in Sartre's popularity there has been an element of *succès de scandale*. But the material rewards of success meant little to him, for he had always been, like his grandfather, an ascetic. Simone de Beauvoir in her memoirs mentions an occasion when she saw Sartre sitting happily in some squalid place near Marseilles, and protests: *"Sartre aimait l'inconfort."* Simone de Beauvoir herself, for that matter, can be considered no sybarite, judging by the account she gives of her way of living. By temperament intellectual and manly, taller than Sartre, and more imperious, she shrank not only from "bourgeois marriage" but from the common domestic role of the female mate. She never made a home for Sartre and herself. Long hours at café tables, bleak hotel bedrooms, holidays spent tramping with packs on their backs—such, she tells us, was their life together. Travelling the hard way, they saw much of Europe together during school vacations before the war—not only Greece, Italy, and Spain, but also the cities of the North, such as London, Amsterdam, and Oxford, in which place Sartre, says his companion, was "so irritated by the traditionalism and snobbery of the English undergraduates that he refused to set foot inside any of the colleges."

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR doubted Sartre's understanding of these foreign cities but she was greatly impressed by the truth of the picture of Le Havre which he gives in *La Nausée*. She suggests that some things can only be understood against a background of provincial life: for a certain kind of novel "it is necessary to have that heavy, stuffy atmosphere for the least desire, the smallest regret to become an obsession." Sartre himself, as a provincial schoolmaster, was subject to hallucinations. He believed he was being followed by crayfish. In time these distressing symptoms cleared up: but the memory of them was evidently with him when years later he was creating in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, the character of Franz, a man who imagines himself being judged by a tribunal of crabs.

Apart from the success of his writings, Sartre was gratified, in 1938, by an appointment to a *lycée* in Neuilly, which enabled him to quit the uncongenial provinces for ever, and live thenceforth in Paris. The war did not greatly inconvenience him. He went as a meteorological clerk to the Maginot Line, where his duties were confined to releasing balloons to test the wind. He wrote to Paulhan:

> This extremely pacific work (I feel that only carrier-pigeon keepers, if the army still has any, can have a more gentle and poetic employment) leaves me many hours of spare time, which I am making use of to finish my novel.

During the victorious Nazi advance of the summer, 1940, Sartre was taken prisoner, but was clever enough to persuade the Germans to repatriate him within a year for "health reasons." At a medical examination in the camp he showed his conspicuous wall-eye to the German doctor and claimed that he suffered from *"troubles de l'équilibre."* Once back in Paris, Sartre participated with Merleau-Ponty, Cazin, and other professors in regular meetings to discuss Marxism and phenomenology; this group is supposed to have had some connection, nowhere very clear, with the "Resistance movement." Sartre had good friends also in the theatrical world. He wrote his first play *Les Mouches* for Barrault, but Barrault decided he did not want it; so it went to Charles Dullin, who put it on only as a result of an unexpected intervention. When Dullin said the play would entail excessive production costs a certain Monsieur Néron, reputedly a millionaire, came forward to finance it. Néron was eventually unmasked as an impostor, but by that time Dullin had gone too far with rehearsals to cancel the production.

LES MOUCHES WAS LICENSED by the Occupying Power in 1943, but suppressed after a short run because some French collaborators complained that it was anti-Vichy propaganda. The meaning of the play is rather ambiguous, but one thing at least is clear, Sartre had abandoned the notion of "salvation through art" for something much closer to the Marxist notion of "salvation through action." *Les Mouches* is a tragedy on the mock antique model favoured by modern French dramatists: the hero Orestes returns incognito to his native city of Argos, which he finds plagued with flies and bowed down by a religion of national repentance: he defies the orders of the Gods to quit the city, and remains to kill the usurper King (his stepfather) and his treacherous mother, the Queen. Then he goes away, proudly. The central argument of the play turns on Orestes' refusal to accept the omnipotence of the Gods. Man is free, he tells Jupiter: therefore man must make his own values. Orestes refuses to feel guilty for having killed the King and

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Queen. He has obeyed his own moral law in doing so: and that is the only moral law there is. He even goes so far as to say that men are like gods. Both are free: "We are equally alone, and our anguish is the same."

One difficulty about this play is that the moral law to which Orestes appeals is a very crude kind of moral law. Orestes kills to avenge his father's murder. And this is, at best, the feudal ethos of *El Cid*. Assuredly, it can be argued that *Les Mouches* is a "Resistance" play, designed to uphold the right of the partisans to kill the German usurper and the French collaborator; but the objection to this reading is that Orestes does nothing for Argos apart from this one bloody deed, for which, in any case, he has a private motive. When he has done it, he simply leaves the city. There is a certain similarity between Orestes and Mathieu, the hero of Sartre's unfinished four-volume novel sequence, *Les Chemins de la liberté* (1946–49). After a fruitless career in search of freedom in living a life as uncommitted as that of Roquentin, Mathieu has his moment of glory as a sniper in the last days of the French army's action against the advancing Germans in 1940. While his comrades prudently wait for the Armistice in a cellar, Mathieu is in a tower picking out German soldiers with a rifle:

> Each one of his shots avenged some ancient scruple.... He fired, and the tables of the Law crashed about him. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—bang! in that bugger's face. Thou shalt not kill—bang! at that scarecrow opposite. He was firing on his fellow-men, on Virtue, on the whole world. Liberty is terror.... He fired. He was cleansed. He was all-powerful. He was free.

It is not easy to grasp Sartre's intention here. The last hours of Mathieu are described in a highly exalted style. His creator evidently sees him as a hero at last; and there is no mistaking Sartre's contempt for the cowardice of those who do not want to fight. On the other hand, Sartre has expressly denied that he meant to uphold in any way the notion that "Liberty is Terror." Mathieu dies *thinking* he has found freedom; but this, in the eyes of his creator, is only the last of Mathieu's many mistakes. And yet it is obvious that the notion that "Liberty is Terror" has a marked fascination for Sartre. The period of the war was, in a special way, "his" period because terrorism was then permissible. There was no need for a more elaborate moral and social theory. The great thing was to overcome traditional feeling that killing and violence was against the moral law. Hence the utility at that time of the existentialist principle that there is no moral law, save those values which men severally make for themselves.

THE EXCEPTIONAL and heroic situation of the war years obscured the first weakness of existentialism: namely, that it provides no means of judging as between one man's moral law and another. I think this moral nihilism can be shown to be connected with Sartre's religious obsessions. In the lecture *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* Sartre said:

> Dostoievsky once wrote "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted," and that for existentialism is the starting point.

Unfortunately this "starting point" of existentialism rests on a mistake. It is not true that moral values depend logically on the existence of God. Ethics is not derived from theological postulates. On the contrary, as Leibniz pointed out, ethics is logically prior to theology. If we did not already have a conception of goodness we could not know God, since God is defined by his moral qualities—all good, all wise, all knowing. Such a Person would be unintelligible to a mind that did not already know what goodness, love, and wisdom are. If there were no moral values, there could be no God. It is a vulgar and unphilosophical error to reverse this truth, and to say that if there were no God there would be no moral values.

We must remember that when Dostoievsky said "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted" he was saying something different from this: namely, that if he, a Christian, had not his faith in God to fortify him, then he, Dostoievsky, would have given way to his lustful and evil impulses. As a statement about Dostoievsky's own nature the words may well be true. But adopted by Sartre, an atheist, as a general proposition of philosophy, the words are extremely misleading.

It may be that Sartre has a feeling similar to Dostoievsky: he may feel that it would be altogether easier to be virtuous if there were a God. Indeed I suspect it is because he does have this feeling that he finds so much inspiration in Christian writers like Kierkegaard and Dostoievsky, and so little inspiration in ordinary humanists. This again reveals his religious temperament. I have said of *La Nausée* that Sartre dramatises, and exaggerates the insecurity and unpredictability of life in a universe where the laws of nature are not absolute laws. A corresponding criticism may be made of Sartre's later works. Sartre dramatises and exaggerates the forlornness and abandonment of man in a world where there is no God-given moral law.

NEVERTHELESS I THINK THAT Sartre makes some points in *Les Mouches* which are important and true, and not always seen to be true. Moral principles are not laid down by God, and they

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are not to be discerned in some mysterious realm of value. Men create their own moral values for themselves. Moral codes are based on decisions, not on metaphysical intuitions. Moreover, Sartre is right, I think, in ascribing the importance he does to human freedom—to what other theorists would call "free will" (he does not like this terminology). To say that men have, in this sense, freedom is to say that they are not the puppets of the Gods, or of the past, or of any other force. They are free, independent, disconnected, isolated, "on their own." The future is entirely open. Assuredly, Sartre says more than this: he identifies the awareness of man's liberty with dread, anguish, vertigo. But this is only the emotional and sensational colour that Sartre adds to a picture which, in its essentials, is perfectly rational.

ANOTHER THING MIGHT PERHAPS be said in defence of Sartre. Although his philosophy rejects any absolute standard for the judgment of norms, it does have a method for distinguishing between one man's conduct and another. Sartre offers the criterion of sincerity, genuineness, or authenticity. The word "sincerity" is not itself very prominent in his writings, but what does recur again and again is an expression which is its opposite, *"la mauvaise foi"* or bad faith. Sartre's argument is that since men are autonomous beings, creators of their own values, the one thing we can ask of them is that they should be true to their own values. For indeed if they don't bear witness to their principles in their actions, they cannot be said to have those principles at all. Otherwise the so-called principles are just words. Sincerity is, therefore, all important.

THIS POINT can be connected with Sartre's rejection of "essentialism." An essentialist can speak of a man who has a good nature, but who behaves badly. An existentialist cannot; in existentialist eyes, a man *is* the sum total of what he *does*. This idea is given forceful expression in Sartre's second play *Huis Clos* (1943). Once again the author makes effective use of the myths of the religion he claims to reject. *Huis Clos* is set in hell, albeit an unexpected kind of hell. It is a windowless room sparsely furnished in the style of the Second Empire. Three characters are introduced in turn. Each expects to find "fires and brimstone and instruments of torture." There are none. The three soon learn, however, they have not escaped punishment. They are to be their own tormentors. Each tortures the others: in a memorable phrase, "hell is other people."

There are two women in the play, the older, a plain-speaking Lesbian named Inès (who ought, one feels, on Sartre's own morality to have been spared from hell because she is nothing if not authentic and sincere) is attracted to the younger woman, Estelle, who repels her, and seeks to please the man, Garcin, who in turn desires only to make a good impression on Inès, who despises him. Both Estelle and Garcin lie at first about the reason for their being damned, but eventually admit the truth. Garcin is a coward and in his bad faith he invokes the falsehood (as Sartre sees it) of essentialism to support his pretence that, although he has committed cowardly acts he has a brave soul or nature. Inès teaches him the painful existentialist message that a man is what he does, and no more. Garcin has no soul or essence to be brave. He is a coward because his deeds are cowardly.

One important fact about *Huis Clos* is that all the characters are dead. Some critics have called the play "depressing," but at any rate it is not a lugubrious picture of life, because it is not a picture of life at all. The protagonists' lives are terminated, and so although they do not have essences, they do have complete biographies. Put in another way, they have no future; they can have no more projects. They are thus damned in the sense that the possibility of salvation is no longer open to them. If Garcin had been alive, there would be a continuing possibility of his ceasing to do cowardly deeds and beginning to do courageous deeds instead—thus of turning from a coward into a brave man. But as he is dead, it is too late. He can no longer redeem himself.

Sartre's decision to set *Huis Clos* in hell is therefore no mere theatrical device. The play is properly set in hell because its subject is damnation. In this way, it explores the other side of the subject of salvation, which is examined in *La Nausée* and *Les Mouches*. Damnation, one may imagine, is an easier subject than salvation to handle artistically. At all events *Huis Clos* is a complete success: a dense, rich, beautifully constructed play which cries out to be acted and which is particularly suited to the shut-in structure of the intellectual *théâtre de poche*. We shall not find the same merits in Sartre's next literary work *Les Chemins de la liberté*, for here we pass from the one-act play to the four-volume novel, from the closed, tight, claustrophobic world of the dead to the open, loose, agoraphobic world of the living: and we return once more to the theme of freedom and salvation.

SARTRE NEVER finished this novel sequence. I shall suggest that there were two reasons for this. The first, that the completion of the work

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was halted by the inadequacies of his ethical theory. The second, that it was halted by the contradiction in his theory of human relations. We have seen that Sartre's ethical theory admits of only one criterion of objective moral judgment—sincerity. He himself became sensible at one stage of the inadequacy of this.

Francis Jeanson, a Marxist, published in 1947 a critical study entitled *Le Problème moral et la pensée de Sartre* in which he attacked Sartre's "subjectivism"; Sartre in a preface commending the book, told Jeanson *"vous avez si parfaitement épousé le développement de ma pensée que vous en êtes venu à dépasser la position que j'avais prise dans mes livres au moment que je la dépassais moi-même."* Already Sartre had promised to publish a more elaborate book on ethics. Unfortunately this book has never been written; and Sartre's failure to produce it is, I believe, connected with his failure to finish *Les Chemins de la liberté*. This matter, in turn, is linked with the contradictions in Sartre's theory of human relations.

LET US, then, consider the views on human relationships put forward in *L'Etre et le Néant*.

This book, which remains Sartre's most famous and most substantial contribution to pure philosophy, was published in 1943. It reached a public vastly wider than that which is usually interested in philosophical books and prepared the way for Sartre's enormous influence as an intellectual leader in France after the Liberation, and for the spectacular, if somewhat charmless cult of existentialism by the bohemian youth of the Left Bank and elsewhere. Now Sartre does not in general accept Berkeley's doctrine that "to exist is to be perceived," but he does adopt it, in a sense, in the case of the existence of human beings. According to his theory, it is only in a very indirect and complicated way that I can be said to exist as an object for myself. But (he maintains) I exist in a direct and simple way as an object for other people. They see me as part of the furniture of their external world. They observe my behaviour. I, seeing them, see me, and knowing that they observe my behaviour, acquire through them a particular form of being which Sartre calls "being-for-others."

This is, in fact, the third form of being which Sartre distinguishes. A conscious being, a "human reality," or thinking person has being "*for*-itself." An object in the external world has being "*in*-itself." The distinction between conscious beings and material objects is familiar enough in other philosophies, but in Sartre's system the distinction is built up into something altogether more elaborate and paradoxical. He requires us to acknowledge that whereas a being in-itself *is*, a being for-itself *is not*. Being in-itself is as it appears. There is no difference, in this case, between appearance and reality. Being in-itself has no "inside" which is opposed to an outside. But being for-itself is all inside. The world as it appears in reflection is a combination of the objective characteristics of the in-itself—factual existence, solidity, quantity, movement: and the subjective contribution of the perceiving for-itself.

The third form of existence is being "for-others." "If there is another," Sartre writes, "I have an outside. I have a nature." Hegel also believed that our self-consciousness exists only because it exists for another person. "I need from the other person an acknowledgment of my being." Sartre might be quoting from Hegel when he writes: "the road of interiority passes through the other." Sartre sums this up in this doctrine of the Look or Gaze. The gaze of the other person gives me existence for him, and thus mediately for myself. This relationship is reciprocal. To the other person I am, in turn, the other. My gaze gives *him* objective existence. Nor is this all. In so far as the look of another person turns me into an object, it turns me into something "solidified," something that has essence. So in a sense it *takes away my freedom*. Correspondingly, my look at the other takes away, in the same sense, his freedom. Thus we are presented with a kind of metaphysical struggle between two "transcendences," each of which tries to "out-transcend" the other.

SARTRE DOES NOT SHRINK from the implications of this theory. On the contrary, he advances without hesitation the conclusion that all relations between people are forms of conflict. He starts off by saying that it is the experience of *shame* which proves to us the existence of other people. For shame is a form of acknowledgment. I should not feel shame if there was nobody in the world to witness the action of which I am ashamed. In shame "I recognise that I am as the other sees me.... I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the other."

How do we behave in this situation? Sartre sees only two lines of conduct open to us. I may try to make myself the sort of object in the eyes of the other that I would wish to be. Or I may try to take away the other's freedom. Both lines of action are forms of conflict—the first finding its extreme expression in masochism, the second in sadism. Love Sartre describes as a project that can never be realised. For me to love you is nothing other than for me to try to make you love me. And since for you to love me is simply for you to try to make me love you, we are confronted by an infinite regress.

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We may each engage in prolonged essays in mutual seduction, but we are doomed to eternal frustration. Because love is an impossible enterprise one may turn to the more desperate endeavour of masochism. But this again, he says, cannot achieve its end. "Masochism is an attempt not to fascinate the other by means of my objectivity, but to cause myself to be fascinated by my objectivity for others." And masochism fails because the more the masochist tries to taste his objectivity, the more he becomes submerged in the consciousness of his subjectivity.

Sartre brackets love and masochism together because they are both attempts to assimilate the liberty of the other, while allowing the other to remain free. But there are types of relationship based on the wish to transform the other, to objectify him. One may attempt to avoid this by indifference: a shutting of one's eyes to the existence of others. This is a manifestation of bad faith. Its disadvantage is that it imposes a continuing strain, through the effort of keeping one's eyes shut; and also a constant uneasiness, because one knows that one is being watched by unseen eyes. Indifference fails: so we may attempt to get at the other person's freedom. Sartre calls one form of this "desire," and characterises it further as "sexual" desire—for sexual desire, he says, is not just a wish for a body, it is a wish for that consciousness which gives meaning and unity to the body. And yet, he continues, desire (like love and masochism and indifference) cannot achieve its aim. For in the very satisfaction of desire, pleasure arises, and pleasure "is the death of desire."

Hence the more desperate resort of sadism. In sadism, as in desire, the goal is to seize and make use of the other not only as object, but as pure incarnated transcendence. The sadist seeks to incarnate the other through violence. The sadist wants sexual relations to be non-reciprocal. He enjoys being a free appropriating power confronting a freedom captured by flesh. But sadism, again, is doomed to failure, because the freedom the sadist seeks to appropriate is out of reach. And the sadist discovers his error when his victim *looks* at him. For that look proves that the victim's transcendence has eluded him. Hatred is likewise doomed to permanent frustration. The aim of hatred is the extinction of the other, the hated one. And this is something that cannot be achieved, for although I can kill a man, terminate his life, *I cannot bring it about that he had never existed*. I cannot realise his non-being.

[2] *L'Etre et le Néant* translated by Hazel Barnes as *Being and Nothingness* (Methuen, London, 1957, pp. 408–9).

WHAT are we to make of this forbidding catalogue of possible relations? Sartre does not claim to have given an exhaustive list, but he does maintain that these are the *fundamental* relationships, and that more complex patterns of conduct are mere "enrichments" of these original attitudes. We always meet each other as "competing transcendencies," and we shall never place ourselves, Sartre says, on a plain of equality when "the recognition of the other's freedom would involve the recognition of our own freedom."

This conclusion of *L'Etre et le Néant* is sharply at variance with views that Sartre has put forward elsewhere, so it is the more important that there should be no misunderstanding. Indeed Sartre's words are unambiguous:

> The Other is on principle inapprehensible; he flees me when I seek him and possesses me when I flee him. Even if I should want to act according to the precepts of Kantian morality, and take the Other's freedom as an unconditioned end, still this freedom would become a transcendence-transcended by the mere fact that I make it my goal. On the other hand, I could act for his benefit only by utilising the Other-as-object as an instrument in order to realise this freedom. . . . Thus I am brought to that paradox which is the perilous reef of all liberal politics and which Rousseau has defined in a single word: I must "force" the Other to be free. Even if this force is not always or even very frequently exercised in the form of violence, nevertheless it still governs the relations of men with each other.[2]

Sartre is thus led to say that *"respect for the other's freedom is an empty word."* He considers the idea that there are some concrete experiences in which we discover ourselves not at odds with others, but in community with them—the experience of *Mitsein* or togetherness. Such feelings, however, he dismisses as purely psychological or subjective. They reveal nothing about Being as such. It is altogether useless, he concludes, for man to try to escape from this dilemma: "one must either transcend the Other, or allow oneself to be transcended by him. The essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*: it is conflict."

These are the views put forward in *L'Etre et le Néant* in 1943. They are flatly contradicted by the argument of the lecture Sartre gave in 1945 entitled *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*. There is no question of Sartre openly repudiating earlier views on this occasion. He claims, on the contrary, to be giving a popular exposition of his theory. In this lecture Sartre says not only that we *can* respect the freedom of others, but that we ought to do so. "I cannot make my own freedom my aim unless I make the freedom of others equally my aim."

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Elsewhere in the same lecture, Sartre introduces the very notion of community which he rejects in *L'Etre et le Néant*. He says:

> A man who belongs to some communist or revolutionary society wills certain concrete ends which imply the will to freedom, but that freedom is willed in community. We will freedom for freedom's sake, in and through particular circumstances. And in thus willing freedom, we discover that it depends entirely on the freedom of others, and that the freedom of others depends on our freedom.[3]

Sartre links this point about the interdependence of freedom with *engagement* or commitment: "once there is commitment I am obliged to will the liberty of others at the same time as my own." Sartre tries to clarify the notion of commitment by the following argument. He says that when a man chooses for himself he chooses for all men. For in the very act of choosing a man confers value on what he chooses; and in thus conferring value he acts, so to speak, in the presence of all mankind. Thus one is responsible to the whole of mankind for the evaluations one makes. Sartre compares the human predicament with that of a general who has to make decisions on which the life or death of many soldiers will depend. Such leaders make their choices "in anguish." It is just this kind of anguish which Sartre describes as being characteristic of all genuine moral experience.

The ideas put forward in *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* are likely to be found more congenial by many readers than the theory of human relationships contained in *L'Etre et le Néant*. The text of the lecture is also easier to read. On the other hand, the ideas in the lecture are advanced with the most perfunctory of arguments, whereas the conclusions of *L'Etre et le Néant* are worked out with great care. Moreover, Sartre himself has described *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* as "an error."

So WE ARE LEFT with a contradiction; and it is not only a contradiction between Sartre's recommendation in *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* that we should respect the freedom of others and his view in *L'Etre et le Néant* that men cannot respect the freedom of others: there is also a contradiction in *L'Etre et le Néant* itself, between Sartre's theory of human relationship and his indeterminism, *i.e.*, his belief that all our choices are entirely free. My own view of the matter is that the theory of human relationship put forward in *L'Etre et le Néant* is false. Our relations with other people do often follow the lines Sartre lays down—probably more often than we like to admit—but there are other forms which are not comprehended in the categories his theory allows. The common experience of mankind proves the possibility of those relations which Sartre says are impossible —namely, friendship, co-operation, affection, and kinds of love which are not just the effort to make oneself loved.

Indeed Sartre himself, in the last fragment of his unfinished tetralogy *Les Chemins de la liberté* describes a relationship of the very kind which his theory excludes. The subject of the novel sequence is the attempts which are made by different people, living in the immediate prewar years and during the war, to find freedom. One seeks freedom in non-attachment, another in devotion to the Communist Party, another in the pursuit of pleasurable sensations, others in other ways. None succeeds. All their ways of life are shown as different forms of bondage. All their relations are those defined in *L'Etre et le Néant*. But in the two chapters of the fourth volume which Sartre never finished, there is a distinctly homosexual, "strange friendship" (the fragment is called *Drôle d'Amitié*), between Brunet, the naïve Communist Party member, and Vicarios, the shrewd, independent Marxist. They become emotionally attached to one another and escape together from their prison camp. They are betrayed, and Vicarios, shot by the German guards, dies in his friend's arms. When Brunet plunges his hand into the dirty hair of his dying companion and cries out in his "absolute of suffering" that his friend—his only friend—may not die, we meet also an absolute of "togetherness."

WE MAY thus attach a double significance to Sartre's abandonment of *Les Chemins de la liberté*. He turned away from the book, after exploring several wrong "roads to freedom," but without suggesting a right road. He also turned away from it when he had reached the point of implicit repudiation of the psychology of *L'Etre et le Néant*; but he stops short of an explicit repudiation. Since the collapse of *Les Chemins de la liberté*, Sartre has written no fiction whatever. Assuredly he has gone on writing plays; just as, in ceasing to write about ethics, he has gone on writing about sociology and politics. But the dramatist does not do the same work as the novelist. The novelist is concerned with analysis, with the inwardness of human experience: he speaks as one man to one reader. The method of the play is dialectical rather than analytical. The dramatist addresses a form of public meeting, his audience: and he addresses it through exteriority, through simulated actions and memor-

[3] *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*. Translated by Philip Mairet as *Existentialism and Humanism*. (Methuen, London, 1948, pp. 51–2.)

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ised words. The audience must put its own interiority on what it sees and hears.

The dramatic form cannot do what Sartre, in 1947, said the writer most urgently wished to do: to "toss the reader from one consciousness to another as from one absolute and irremediable universe to another similarly absolute." But, on the other hand, the theatre, being a social institution, is a more effective medium than fiction for the expression of political ideas. All the plays Sartre has written since *Huis Clos* have been political plays. Politics, or more precisely socialism, has become Sartre's chief, his all-pervasive concern. The phrase "committed literature"—*"la littérature engagée"*—which Sartre made famous, meant, as he originally defined it, literature committed to any genuinely moral view of life, no matter what. Indeed it could not be otherwise on the existentialist principle that every man must be the maker of his own values. But by some obscure shuffling of the cards, Sartre has made the phrase "committed literature" mean "literature committed to socialism" as if no other commitment could possibly be genuine.

THIS CURIOUS SLEIGHT OF HAND can be seen at work if one compares the arguments of Sartre's two books of "psycho-analytic" literary criticism *Baudelaire* (1947) and *Saint Genet* (1953). Sartre claims in the first book that Baudelaire "went wrong" at the age of seven, when, after his mother's re-marriage, he deceived himself into believing that it was his destiny to be "for ever alone." Baudelaire thereafter repudiated any social obligations and cultivated a form of dandyism and diabolism which was, in effect, bourgeois and reactionary. Genet, whose life Sartre analyses by the same methods, also made a decisive choice at an early age. Genet was a bastard (Baudelaire, like Sartre, was a mere orphan, or "false bastard," in the Sartrian terminology), and Genet was caught stealing things. Genet heard himself called "the Thief" and henceforth decided to be what he heard himself called. He became a dedicated criminal. Now, the striking thing is that whereas Sartre attacks Baudelaire for choosing to be what he believed himself destined to be, he praises Genet for choosing to be what he heard himself called: indeed, he not only praises him, he sanctifies him—he calls him Saint Genet the Martyr. But what, we may ask, is the real difference between these two cases? Morally, one must say, very little. The difference is political. Genet is the enemy of the bourgeoisie, while Baudelaire ended on the side of the reactionaries. This, and this alone, is why Sartre exalts the one, and damns the other. But Sartre cannot bring himself to say this in so many words. He pretends that his case against Baudelaire turns on the choice the poet made "in bad faith" (made at the age of seven, remember) to succumb to his destiny, when there is no such thing as destiny. But this is preposterous as criticism, whether moral or literary: and, as we have seen, Sartre's saint and martyr, Genet, made a similar choice at a similar age.

Of Sartre's own socialist commitment, I have no wish to speak unappreciatively. One cannot but respect his unfailing readiness as a celebrated writer to give a lead on public problems, his concern for the common good, and his *seriousness*—so unlike the ruinous *légerté* of Giraudoux and Shaw. And yet in the very intensity of Sartre's socialism one can, I think, detect an element of what he himself calls evasion—a flight from the contradictions in his analysis of personal relations into a philosophy which does not reckon in individuals, but in masses.

IN 1960 Sartre brought out an even longer theoretical work than *L'Etre et le Néant*. This was Volume I of his *Critique de la raison dialectique*, which was concerned with the collective "anthropology" of mankind—an attempt to set forth a new kind of Marxist theory, that is Marxism revitalised by existentialism. There is no doubt that Sartre is here giving his Marxism priority over his existentialism. He defines Marxism as a genuine *philosophy*—that is, one of the creative systems (like those of Descartes and Kant) which dominate certain periods in history. Marxism dominates the present. Existentialism is only an *ideology*—a minor system which merely "exploits the domain" created by the real philosophers. The vitalising contribution of Sartre's existentialism to Marxism, apparently, is to purge it of its anachronistic 19th-century determinism; and to offer us a Marxism which admits free choice. The existentialist tail has thus energetically to wag the Marxist dog.

The rest of Sartre's *Critique* (or rather, of that one volume which has so far appeared) is taken up with a study of mass relations. Here we may notice another departure from the teaching of *L'Etre et le Néant*. Conflict is no longer said to be a fundamental characteristic of human relations. That conflict exists between men, Sartre admits: but he says it is entirely due to scarcity. It is the insufficiency of food and other materials in the world which brings about the struggle between man and man. This makes men's violence understandable, and, so to speak, rational. Sartre is thus now opposing the view of Hobbes, Freud—and *L'Etre et le Néant*—that conflict arises from aggressive forces in nature or Being itself. It is a

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contingent and curable circumstance: overcome scarcity and one can eliminate conflict. This first volume of the *Critique* is intended only to provide the foundations of a "structural anthropology" as Sartre calls it: the next volume, he promises, will show that there is one human history with one intelligible truth.

THERE WAS a time when Sartre tried to be an independent Marxist in practice as well as in theory. His magazine *Les Temps Modernes* was started in 1946 as a forum for independent socialist thought. In 1948 he actually went so far as to found a new political party, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire*. This gained some following among intellectuals, but none among workers, and after a short history it expired.

From the collapse of the *R.D.R.* Sartre drew one lesson: that henceforth he must collaborate with the Communist Party, and this, without actually joining its ranks, he has since steadfastly done. As a result, he parted company with nearly all the socialist intellectuals who helped him launch *Les Temps Modernes*, including two of his closest friends, Albert Camus and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Camus alienated Sartre, not only by his criticisms of Russia, but even more sharply by producing in *L'Homme révolté* a plea for non-violent sydicalism. This treatise, "quietist and in effect conservative," led Sartre to write to Camus: "Many things unite us; few divide us; but those few are already too many." With Merleau-Ponty the breach was less abrupt. It so happened that Merleau-Ponty, a better dialectician than Sartre (and in academic circles the more honoured philosopher), refused increasingly often to sign the manifestos Sartre drafted on political questions of the day.

Before he became a "fellow-traveller" Sartre wrote a play which some have understood as a bitter indictment of the Party: *Les Mains sales*, in the course of which a Balkan Communist leader is murdered by his comrades for pursuing a policy of bourgeois collaboration which, some hours after his death, is revealed to be the right Moscow line. The irony of this man's fate has obscured what is for the author the real message in the play, namely that which is indicated by the title: *Dirty Hands*, Sartre is saying, are a necessary part of politics, and the man who wants to keep his hands clean will do nothing for socialism. This theme is repeated in Sartre's film script *L'Engrenage*, and receives its fullest expression in his longest, and best post-war play, *Le Diable et le bon Dieu*. There an idealist pacifist socialist is pitted against a hard-headed realistic socialist (with dirty hands); and the argument of the play is unambiguous—that the latter is right. One might call his theme the politics of humanism: and Sartre's argument in *Le Diable et le bon Dieu* is that the politics of humanism must renounce the ethics of non-violence which belongs to the politics of religion and contemplation and quietism, and belief in the world to come. The politics of humanism is the politics of this world, and because this world is deeply touched with evil (the consequence, in Sartre's view, of material scarcity), to master it one must, he thinks, be ruthless, one must "soil one's hands with crime."

I THINK one can detect a remarkable resemblance between these views and those of Machiavelli—not the "cynical" Machiavelli of popular tradition, but the historical Machiavelli, who cared passionately for the regeneration of Italy and who dreamed of a revival of the ancient Roman republican ideals of *virtù*, courage, magnanimity, and manliness to take the place of the creeping, monkish ideals of humility, self-denial, non-resistance, patience, and prayer, which were taught by Christianity. To achieve these ends he thought it would sometimes be necessary to lie, cheat, and kill, Sartre does not look to the same ancient virtues: his ideal is rather the classless society of Marx, but like Machiavelli, he is concerned less with the structure of a better world than with bringing it to birth: and like Machiavelli, he thinks it is imperative to overcome the moral inhibitions which derive from another *ethos*.

And yet there is a sense in which Sartre is conspicuously unlike Machiavelli. Machiavelli is the complete and unadulterated humanist; there is no admixture of religion in him. In Sartre there is. It is a religious sensibility which shrinks, as Sartre does, from the physical world, and perceives it as entirely viscous. The humanist rejoices in Nature: but Sartre sees natural objects as "messy," "vague," "sticky," "flabby," "creamy," "thick," "tepid," "soft," and "obscene." Sexual congress is invariably depicted in his books as a charmless exercise, and his female characters are all repulsive. The remark of St. Bernard about women being "bags of excrement" might well have been spoken by Sartre.

The perfect order of astronomy, which spoke to Kant and Newton of God, is the order for which Sartre's heart hungers. What appeals to him is everything which is opposed to viscosity —the hard, austere, metallic, mathematical, predictable, inflexible, stern, and masculine. Sartre once said that "everyone is an atheist nowadays, even the believer." I should rather suggest that the reverse of this is true: that Sartre's kind of atheist makes God live by brooding so much on what he calls God's

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"death." The American Protestant theologian Paul Tillich has introduced the name the "God above God" for the God whose existence is affirmed by certain kinds of doubt: "the God who is absent as an object of faith is present as the source of restlessness which asks the question of the meaning of existence." Sartre is the perfect illustration of Tillich's thesis, and readers who share Sartre's taste for psychoanalytic literary criticism may look for a connection between the "God above God" and that father-of-a-father who dominated Sartre's childhood.

BUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT about Sartre is not only that he has this unmistakable religious sensibility, but that his sensibility has a polar antithesis in his rationalist intelligence. And if we resist the teaching of *L'Etre et le Néant* that all relationships between people are based on conflict, we must at the same time admit that conflict is the stuff of drama; and also that conflict of another kind, in the sense of the dialectic, is a large part of philosophy. This is Sartre's strength. His weakness lies in his want of balanced insight. Affirming the need for soiled hands in certain circumstances (for which a reasonable case can be made) Sartre has gone on to condone almost every act of bloodshed committed by Castro and Khrushchev and other avowed enemies of the bourgeoisie. Sartre's righteous hatred of the bourgeois wickedness has not only got the better of his judgment, it has often precluded judgment. Moreover, his passionate attachment to the notion of salvation has caused a deterioration of his work as literature. For once he ceased to see art as a way of salvation, his dedication to literature as such diminished: practically all his best writing dates from the earlier years of his career; and only one later work, *Le Diable et le bon Dieu*, can be adduced to counter the belief that the creative artist in him has been progressively swallowed up by the theorist and polemicist.

Archaic

Mother, a deeper grief than Time
Crumbles the darkness of my bed;
Could you know, you could not help
The ancient light towards which I slide.

For that distinction of my fate,
—The unusual contours, the half-starved look,
With insane prescience for which you took
The humble semen of my father's race,—

Unbinds me slowly and with pain
Out of this anti-womb of night
Onto a colder Greek hill-side,

Where every second of the growing light
So cruelly your hope derides,
You'd wish me uncreate, in you again.

Geoffrey Thurley

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POETRY

An Anatomy of Orpheus

Rilke among the Critics — By MICHAEL HAMBURGER

EARLY in 1927, not many months after Rilke's death, his daughter wrote to Hugo von Hofmannsthal to tell him of plans for the posthumous publication of works by Rilke and ask for Hofmannsthal's advice and co-operation. Hofmannsthal replied:

> ...If I felt my death drawing very close, I should leave instructions in a sense almost diametrically opposed. I should do all I could—in so far as anything can be done in this disconnected world of ours—to suppress all those tiresome and often indiscreet statements about a productive individual and his works, all that diluting chatter, or at least to deprive it of nourishment as far as possible by the removal of private letters and notes, by putting difficulties in the way of that inane biography-mania and all indecencies of that kind. My idea would be to really entrust the hardly explicable phenomenon that once existed here, R.M.R. or H.H., to death, even to oblivion if need be (except in the hearts of a few loyal men and women), and leave the works to engage unaided in their hard secret struggle with the next hostile decades....

It may look as though Rilke's reputation had not only withstood these hostile decades, but reversed the usual process by turning hostility into unstinted homage. Editions of his poems, prose works and letters, translations into countless languages, biographies, memoirs, critical studies and academic theses have jostled one another at a rate that must be almost unique in modern literature. To many of his readers Rilke was not a poet, but *the* poet, the reincarnation in his time of the archetypal Orpheus whose myth he revived and celebrated in the *Sonnets*. Yet his work appealed to many different kinds of readers and satisfied many different needs. It was as exquisitely musical and pictorial as the poetry of the French Symbolists and their German successor, Stefan George, yet without being deliberately recondite and exclusive; and though firmly based on an æsthetic akin to theirs, it was open to that order of reality which had been the province of the opposing school, the Naturalists. It ranged from the intense self-communion of the *Stundenbuch* to the seemingly social preoccupations of the *Buch der Bilder* and the seeming absorption in things of the *Neue Gedichte*. During the critical years that followed Rilke came to terms with the new styles and energies that might so easily have left him stranded. Like Yeats, and unlike Valéry, George, or Hofmannsthal, he entered yet another new phase as a distinctly "modern"—post-1914—poet. Most important of all, as far as his reputation is concerned, he annexed so much of "life" to a basically autonomous art, so much of the language of religious and mystical communion to a basically individualistic outlook, that like no other poet of his time he seemed to offer a new existential philosophy and a new morality. This philosophic and didactic function can be discounted as one of those misunderstandings on which, as he said, the fame of artists rests; but it has become as difficult to separate from Rilke's fame as our knowledge of his person from his poetry.

HOFMANNSTHAL KNEW that his own choice entailed other difficulties and dangers, and foresaw the eclipse which his own work was to suffer during those hostile decades; but, now that Rilke's struggle has begun in earnest, it will soon be all too clear that Hofmannsthal's warning was apt and right. Three-and-a-half decades after Rilke's death the spate of publications continues as though nothing had happened; but more and more readers of poetry turn from Rilke's work with a feeling little short of disgust. The myth so beautifully sustained in his later poetry has been blasted by a barrage of biographical "indecencies"; the philosophy well and truly debunked by critical examinations like Professor Romano Guardini's line-by-line exegesis of the *Duino Elegies* (now made available in an excellent English translation[1]); the Orphic poet, in Pro-

[1] Romano Guardini: *Rilke's Duino Elegies*. Translated by K. G. Knight. Darwen Finlayson, 30s.

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fessor E. C. Mason's scholarly and sardonic study,[2] anatomised by travel snapshots like the following:

> There is still, however, one way in which Rilke is disturbed, and that is when he is bathing. The chief thing about bathing is, for him, not so much actually going into the water, at least above the knee, as divesting himself of his bathing costume altogether, to take the air more unimpededly. When this is not practicable, he makes a point of putting on the top half of his striped black and red bathing costume except in case of emergency, the emergency being "the Englishwoman who suddenly pops up somewhere." It was under these very trying circumstances that Rilke wrote the third part of his *Book of Hours*, one of his most important cycles of religious lyric, terminating with the famous hymn to St. Francis, "the most loving of all."

The source, of course—duly supplied in a note—is an intimate letter of Rilke's; and, having been published as part of the Rilke canon, these are fair game. A great many of them were written with an unmistakable squint at posterity; but this one is part of a chattily innocent sequence to his wife, very much like anyone's account of a holiday abroad, only more observant and more amusing. If poetry, as well as poets, were subject to the usual moral imperatives and responsibilities, it would be reasonable to blame Rilke for some of the posthumous indignities which his work has suffered. It was he who sowed the seeds of the philosophical and theological criticism of his work in confessions and manifestos like his *Letters to a Young Poet*, *Letter from a Young Artisan*, and his letters to his Polish translator on the *Duino Elegies*. Almost from the start, he claimed an absolute authority. His early autobiographical sketch *Ewald Tragy* contains this casual remark: "I am my own legislator and King; there is no one above me, not even God." Yet as far as his poetry is concerned, this question of responsibility is neither here nor there. If we cannot dissociate the poetry from the pretensions and vanities—let alone the harmless foibles—of the man, it is we who are the losers.

Both Professor Mason and Professor Guardini have long been prominent in that branch of Rilke criticism which has been mainly concerned with his ideas. Professor Guardini's complete commentary on the *Elegies* first appeared in 1953, but sections of it were published in book form much earlier. A distinguished Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher, Professor Guardini has published similar examinations of the works of Dante, Hölderlin, and Dostoievsky. His approach to Rilke—and, very broadly speaking, his inevitable judgment also—is summarised and justified in the Introduction:

> In view of the far-reaching claims which the poet makes for his work we are not merely justified—we are *obliged* to examine how far they can be substantiated.... The question to be answered here is not whether Rilke's message commands respect, but whether his pronouncements are true in themselves; whether his impressive account of life and death, of humanity and personal relations really corresponds to the truth.

Though the answer, needless to say, is *no*, and Professor Guardini finds in Rilke's thorough-going individualism "the same gaping void" later to be filled by revolution and dictatorship, because "the overburdening of modern autonomous man creates an empty space"—much of his detailed interpretation of the *Elegies* is sympathetic, even where it is open to doubt or errs on the side of literalness. Professor Guardini's learning is not confined to theology and philosophy; he can introduce his comments on the fig-tree image in the Sixth Elegy with an explanation of the flowering and fruiting habits of the fig-tree, or relate Rilke's stylistic innovations to those of Gottfried Benn, Mr. Eliot, and Mr. Auden.

At first sight Professor Mason's new book on Rilke strikes one as little more than a postscript to his important earlier studies, if not as a scraping of the barrel of Rilke criticism; and in fact his Introduction to the first complete English translation of Rilke's *Stundenbuch*[3] is more consistently excellent. The trouble with his book is the subject itself, Rilke's attitude to the Anglo-Saxon world, its literatures and representatives, in relation to his political, social, and cultural preferences in general. Professor Mason sets out to prove that Rilke's prejudice against all things British and American—a prejudice familiar from Heine and Nietzsche before him—was not as complete as Rilke himself professed. But does it matter greatly? As Professor Mason is well aware, it is the prejudice that tells us most about Rilke, not the minute particulars that contradict it; and the prejudice itself was based on a vague identification of Britain and America with the things that Rilke disliked in the modern world. In collecting his particulars, Professor Mason goes to lengths surprising in a critic so remark-

[2] E. C. Mason: *Rilke, Europe and the English-Speaking World*. Cambridge U.P., 30s.

[3] Rainer Maria Rilke: *The Book of Hours*. Translated by A. L. Peck. Hogarth Press, 18s.

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able for his good sense. Thus he adduces examples of Rilke's use of English words, but includes such loan words as "tramway," "snob," "clown," and "pony" for which there were no German equivalents. (He could also have mentioned that in *Ewald Tragy* Rilke used the transitional form *"Trambahn,"* later to be wholly naturalised as *"Strassenbahn"* or *"Elektrische."* But could Rilke have anticipated the whole process?) One way in which Professor Mason's good sense gets even with the subject is in ironies at Rilke's expense, like the one already quoted, or this one about Rilke's reading in English:

> After all his disappointing and estranging experiences with the English language and English literature, even when they were represented by such figures as Shakespeare or Keats, he would appear here at last, in this British *Lady's Newspaper and Court Journal*, to have found something more congenial to him.

But this is an allusion to one of many interesting aspects of Rilke's rare contacts with England that had received little or no attention. Other English literature congenial to Rilke included works by Arthur Symons, Yeats, and D. H. Lawrence. By his deft management of his miscellaneous facts, and in digressions on such matters as Rilke's "partisanship for the child against adults," which affected all his views on societies and nations, or on Rilke's "gesture of withdrawal," Professor Mason succeeds in drawing a new and very lifelike portrait of Rilke after all. By the time we reach *Excursus II* on *Problems of the Duinese Credo* we are back at the heart of Rilke criticism, and know considerably more about Rilke than before. Professor Mason's conclusion, too, is rather less damning than Professor Guardini's, for he allows that "the doctrine of the Duinese Elegies does after all amount to a glorification in new terms of art as a substitute for religion."

This is also the view of Professor E. L. Stahl in his inaugural lecture at Oxford.[4] Though Rilke's terms were certainly new, the glorification of human creativity, either for its own sake or within a variety of metaphysical and ethical systems, has very solid precedents in earlier German literature. Professor Stahl traces its ancestry in 18th-century writers like Moses Mendelssohn, Kant, Karl Philipp Moritz, Schiller, and Goethe, then on to Nietzsche and Rilke. Even more than Friedrich Schlegel, whom Professor Stahl mentions, Novalis anticipated Rilke's crucial conception of life as something not given, but created by the imagination. "In the final count," Professor Stahl says of Rilke's Ninth Elegy, "man stands justified by his creativity alone."

Like the English version of Professor Guardini's interpretation of the *Elegies*, Professor Stahl makes use of Mr. J. B. Leishman's translation, but avoids embarrassments and ambiguities by basing his comments on the original text. If Mr. Leishman's translation does not prove literal enough to be substituted for the original even in a commentary concerned less with diction and style than with meaning—and there is no reason why it should—one dreads to think that Dr. A. L. Peck's new version of the *Stundenbuch* might be put to the same test, or only that English readers might consider it "capable of taking the place of the original ... of conveying ... a true impression of the qualities of the original," as Dr. Peck says he wanted his version to do.

Admittedly the *Book of Hours* is very much less translatable than the *Elegies*, for all their idiosyncrasies of metaphor and syntax (some of which Professor Guardini deplores as a violation of the German language). Mr. Leishman has rendered these idiosyncrasies—even, at times, with a vengeance. The diction of the *Stundenbuch* is less purely Rilkean, for it blends some of the conventional vocabulary of Romantic and religious verse with a new colloquial fluency and bareness. That parts, at least, of its three sequences are translatable was proved by Miss Babette Deutsch, who treated them with a poet's linguistic tact. Fluency is the weakness and strength of the *Stundenbuch*. Its multiple rhymes and irregular cadences meet too little resistance—that is its weakness; its strength is simply to flow, over shallows, deeps, and all sorts of curious deposits. A rendering that interrupts the flow—which, as Professor Mason writes in his admirable Introduction, is also "the ceaseless ebb and flow of Rilke's inner life"—utterly ruins this brilliant and precarious performance. Above all, a rendering must convey an effect of ease, spontaneity, and inexhaustible improvisation, as Dr. Peck's laborious inversions and fustian poeticisms disastrously do not. "Of visage wondrous pale" —"his watch to keep"—"On, onward still" (where Rilke says, "one must only go")—"The Baptist gaunt" (only "the Baptist" in German) —such dead and insulating phrases occur on every page, not to cite the more monstrous inversions, archaisms, and padding epithets.

Here is one of the most celebrated (and controversial) poems from the *Book of Monastic Life* in the original and in Dr. Peck's translation:

Was wirst du tun, Gott, wenn ich sterbe?
Ich bin dein Krug (wenn ich zerscherbe?),

[4] E. L. Stahl: *Creativity*. A theme from *Faust* and the *Duino Elegies*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

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Ich bin dein Trank (wenn ich verderbe?),
Bin dein Gewand und dein Gewerbe,
mit mir verlierst du deinen Sinn.

Nach mir hast du kein Haus, darin
dich Worte, nah und warm, begrüssen.
Es fällt von deinen müden Füssen
die Samtsandale, die ich bin.

Dein grosser Mantel lässt dich los.
Dein Blick, den ich mit meiner Wange
warm, wie mit einem Pfühl, empfange
wird kommen, wird mich suchen, lange—
und legt beim Sonnenuntergange
sich fremden Steinen in den Schoss.

Was wirst du tun, Gott? Ich bin bange.

What will you do, God, if death takes me?
I am your jug (if someone breaks me?)
I am your drink (if curdling cakes me?)
I am your dress, your trade—it makes me
think, if I go, your meaning goes.

No home you'll have, none standing close
with warm, kind words and welcome cheering.
No velvet sandals you'll be wearing
on your tired feet—for I am those.

Your great cloak, too, will then be gone.
Your glance, which on my cheek finds rest,
pillowed so snug, so warmly pressed,
seeking will come, and, dispossessed,
will, as the sun sets in the west,
sink in some lap of alien stone.

What will you do, God? I'm distressed.

There is no need to comment on the inevitable loss of significant alliteration and assonance, on which Rilke relied to an uncommon degree in these poems for his transitions and associations; his dependence on them was one aspect of his precarious fluency, and the only question worth asking is whether a translation could possibly afford the loss. In the first line *"if death takes me"* introduces an alien motive by what amounts to a personification of death; the sensitive reader cannot help asking himself what precisely is the relationship here between God and death, a theological question which doesn't arise over Rilke's *"if I die,"* and which is a disturbing irrelevance in the context. The translator has also committed himself to an awkward Byronic rhyme, which leads to the faintly nauseating *"cakes me"* in the third line and, much worse, to the circumlocution and inorganic enjambement in the fourth and fifth, *"it makes me / think"* (where Rilke only says: *"I am your garment and your trade, / if you lose me you lose your meaning"*).

The next two lines introduce a vulgar sentimentality which Rilke narrowly avoids; his simple *"greet you"* becomes *"welcome cheering,"* and the superfluous *"none standing close"* may refer either to *"home"* or to a person, where Rilke clearly speaks only of a house and words; these words are *"near and warm,"* not *"kind."* Rilke's velvet sandal *"drops from God's weary feet"*—a much more striking concept than the translator's mere negative. The same loss of dynamism is incurred in the next line; where in Rilke the cloak actively detaches itself from God, in the translation it is merely *"gone."* In the next action Rilke puts his stress on the *"I"* of the poem and thus on the receiving of God's glance; the translation distorts and cloys the action, mainly by substituting *"snug"* and *"warmly pressed"* for Rilke's single, and relatively neutral, adverb "warmly." The penultimate line, *"in some lap of alien stone,"* again misleads, by suggesting the lap of some person less receptive than the speaker—reducing *"stone"* to an abstract and conventional attribute—or possibly the lap of a statue, whereas Rilke says *"lies down in the lap(s) of alien stones"*—the whole point being that these stones are things with an independent, inhuman mode of existence.

These renderings will do Rilke no service now that his reputation in English-speaking countries is threatened not only by the cold blast of dogmatic criticism but by a growing indifference to foreign literature.

Miss Elizabeth Jennings, nonetheless, has included Rilke in her study of the relationship between poetry and mystical experience.[5] Since she writes both as a poet and as a Roman Catholic, one might have expected her to agree with Professor Guardini's condemnation of Rilke's ideas or Professor Mason's analysis of Rilke's "mysticism" in his Introduction to the *Book of Hours*—the mysticism of a poet who declared that "religion is the art of those who are uncreative" and believed that it is men, especially artists, who create God. But whether out of charity or ambivalence Miss Jennings is reluctant to acknowledge any irreconcilable quarrel between Christian dogma and Rilke's religion of poetry. In her eagerness to establish parallels between mystical and poetic vision she goes so far as to affirm on p. 118 that "the 'angels' which appear in, and are indeed the protagonists of, the *Duino Elegies*, are 'pseudonyms' for God," only to state on the next page: "And Rilke's angels, those potent beings who soar through the *Duino Elegies*, are secular angels not sacred ones." The same desire to have it both ways informs her essays on all those poets—Hart

[5] Elizabeth Jennings: *Every Changing Shape*. André Deutsch, 25s.

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Crane, Wallace Stevens, Edwin Muir, and Mr. David Gascoyne—who do not fit comfortably into a line running from St. Augustine through the English and Spanish mystics, Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne, to Hopkins, Péguy, Bernanos, and Mr. Eliot.

As long as she relies on her own experience as a writer and reader of poetry, Miss Jennings is reliable and perceptive. "There is no other modern poetry," she writes of Rilke's *Elegies*, "which gives so strong a sense of the poet both being carried away by his verse yet also of never quite losing his hold on it," and goes on to remark on their symphonic structure. Unfortunately she has felt obliged to present a series of miscellaneous essays as though they were parts of a single coherent study—not the record of a poet's response to writers to whom she feels related in one way or another, but an austere thesis on a subject full of pitfalls; and to provide information that is neither indispensable nor correct. Quite unnecessarily, she gives the year of Rilke's death, and dates it 1927 instead of 1926; she writes of "Rilke's deep affection for his mother," when Rilke attributed his difficulties with women to his inability to love his mother (and the fear of being loved); she asserts that "desperate and painful as Rilke's poetic struggles often were, he never for a moment doubted the power of poetry," when the important thing about Rilke's struggles is that he did doubt the power of poetry, and even contemplated giving it up in his middle years to become a country doctor. She concludes that "one can, I think, justly claim not only that Rilke knew personally both the darkness and ecstasy of the search for God (even though he often expressed it in different terms), but also that such experience and the transcribing of it released him from his own intense subjectivity"—when all the evidence points to the precise reverse of this claim.

The truth which Miss Jennings never quite faces throughout her book is that whatever common faculties may be involved in both, religious faith is one thing, poetic imagination another. (Even in purely psychological terms they are distinct in that faith demands a concentration of the will, whereas will is the enemy of imagination.) In her introductory chapter she distinguishes religious mysticism from the modern tendency to raise "the sense of *place* to a kind of metaphysical contemplation"; but when she comes to deal with Rilke and Wallace Stevens she fails to bring out the special significance of this metaphysic of place in their work. "Life is an affair of people and places. But for me life is an affair of places and that is the trouble," Stevens put it with laconic finality. In the same way, and for the same reasons, Miss Jennings has missed an excellent opportunity to compare the angels of Rilke with those of Stevens—"secular" and "necessary" angels in both cases—and indeed to recognise the essential agreement of these two theologians of the creative imagination, hierophants of the earthly.

"... What makes the poet the potent figure that he is, or was, or ought to be, is that he creates the world to which we turn incessantly and without knowing it, and that he gives to life the supreme fictions without which we are unable to conceive it." This is Stevens, but it is also the essence of what Rilke said about the poet's function and vocation.

> The poet "has had immensely to do with giving life whatever savour it possesses. He has had to do with whatever the imagination and the senses have made of the world...."
>
> "The world about us would be desolate except for the world within us...."
>
> "The major poetic idea in the world is and always has been the idea of God...."
>
> "After one has abandoned a belief in God, poetry is the essence which takes its place as life's redemption...."
>
> "... poetry's mystical theology...."
>
> "The poet is the priest of the invisible...."
>
> "Every man dies his own death...."

There is scarcely a seminal idea in Rilke without its exact counterpart in the poems and prose writings of Wallace Stevens, from which all the above are extracts.[6]

STEVENS, TOO, OFFERS THE CLUE to why so much excellent Rilke criticism now seems to be flogging a dead horse. "Rational beings are canaille," Stevens said (and Rilke also in slightly different words); and "in the long run the truth does not matter." These blunt and shocking admissions of what many poets feel, but few have dared to say, goes to the root of the misunderstanding between poets like Rilke and Stevens—"thinkers without final thoughts," to quote Stevens yet again—and their interpreters. (That Rilke became one of these when he consented to explain his own work has already been regretted here.) Such poets think experimentally, not definitively; but every overall interpretation of their thought must treat it as though it were definitive, as though their discoveries were codifications, their flashes of

[6] That Stevens knew Rilke's work transpires from references in his *Opus Posthumus* (pp. 245, 279, 280). What concerns me here, however, is not a possible debt, but a deep concordance that has escaped those who have dealt with Stevens's more obvious French sources and affinities; and the light which Stevens's clearer awareness sheds on Rilke's practice.

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recognition (within a particular context) the articles of a creed. The result is like using a lasso to catch a humming-bird.

And what do such poets discover? Stevens, once more, knows the answer: "Poetry is a satisfying of the desire for resemblance." The satisfying of this desire is rarely contained within the bounds of a poet's beliefs, even if he is a poet who holds beliefs. The imagination picks up its resemblances wherever it can find them. If it needs angels, it will take them from a religion which the poet cannot accept, or actively opposes; hence the Christian imagery in Rilke. Unscrupulous as such habits may seem, not only Christian mystics, but sober apologists and preachers are equally apt to borrow metaphors, and more than metaphors, from worldly pursuits, arts and sciences which they have no intention of glorifying. It is a two-way traffic; and though in recent centuries faith and imagination have usually moved in opposite directions, it is their linguistic convergences that confound criticism.

GRANTED that Rilke's creed scarcely "works" outside the sphere in which poetic processes, or their analogues, apply, we are forced every day of our lives to allow for specialisations of this order. To write great poetry is quite enough for one man to achieve in "this disconnected world of ours." That the truths of poetry are partial and provisional truths does not make them less valuable. It is up to the reader (and critic) not to approach poetry with expectations which it cannot, by its nature, fulfil. If Rilke is unlikely to attract many more disciples and hagiographers for the time being, he will be losing nothing but an accidental accretion; and his poetry will be all the better off without it.

Helios

Father, in a benign hour
By the bare solitude of the beaches,
By the naked solitude of the sea,
In the immense solitude of heaven
You uncovered your face,
And I worshipped you.

In the strict simplicity of light,
To the sound of the sea's thunder,
In the silence of your light,
My music fell from me
Like a forgotten tune.

O all-beholding father,
You who have looked upon the Pharaohs,
And upon the Crucifixion on Golgotha
And the passing generations of mankind,
There came no cloud between us,
Creator and creature were one,
In the bare solitude of the beaches,
By the naked solitude of the sea,
In a benign hour,
In the silence of your light.

John Hall Wheelock

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THEATRE

Down on the Side of Life

By Nigel Dennis

NOBODY WILL DENY that there is an approved method of expressing sharp disagreement with an important person. One begins by declaring a profound gratitude for his existence, and one continues gratefully for at least a page, listing the person's astonishing qualities and explaining exactly why the world would be poor without him. By the time one has reached the second page it is clear to the reader—or should be, if the work has not been botched—that far from being merely poor without this titan, the world would be so poverty-stricken as to constitute a dead loss. And this is the moment when the critic, as if anxious to re-assure the world that its fate does not hang upon this single, priceless life, takes up his scythe and starts mowing down the golden harvest which he has nourished with such respect. He reminds his readers that even the stoutest of titans is not without weaknesses, and these he begins to list. There is a weakness in the head, apparently, about which little can be done. The stuff which has gone into the feet is largely grey and clammy. The heart is all right, if you like your hearts spongy. After a good deal of this, the reader begins to feel braver, for he sees that the man's talent has a good deal of sham in it and that the world can struggle on without him after all. And by the end of the article—if the article has been properly written—the reader should have the feeling that this lonely struggle is not only possible but extremely desirable. For it is better to stumble on alone than accept leadership from one of whom we can say now with confidence that it were better if he had never been born.

Mr. Kenneth Tynan was born in Birmingham in 1927. If he had not taken this initial step the world would not necessarily be better but it would certainly be more at ease. This is a hard thing to say because Mr. Tynan, in a famous bicker with M. Ionesco, declared that his business in life was the healing of suffering, and no man that sees his work in such a golden light can enjoy being feared by others as a bigoted dentist. Yet such is the case without a doubt. Mr. Tynan has spent ten years using sharp, unpleasant instruments for the advancement of humanity. He has done so in the name of "realism," but this has always been a form of romantic idealism. As in the case of his favourite critic, Bernard Shaw, the pursuit of a dream has been represented by the dreamer as a practical preference for the useful. And, again like Shaw, Mr. Tynan has not found it easy to shape his natural romanticism into an utilitarian likeness. If now, at last, he has found peace on the rock of Brecht, it is because this playwright above all found ways in which imagination, romanticism and mawkishness could be made to seem hard-headed, radical and practical.

There are two reasons why Mr. Tynan's collected reviews* are interesting. The first is that they record the history of his own quest; the second, that this quest was concurrent with a similar march in the English theatre. The reviews cover the period from 1950 to 1960, and during this time the transformation of the drama was matched by the transformation of Mr. Tynan. Both transformations are to be applauded, so long as they do not stunt themselves by becoming permanent. Mr. Tynan is more vulnerable than the theatre in this respect because he has reached his goal and made up his mind. The theatre, not having a mind, never reaches any goal and just goes where fashion pushes it.

The fashion when Mr. Tynan began reviewing was perfectly conventional—as it will be again, no doubt, before long. The fashion Mr. Tynan wanted to impose was more exciting: he loved "the theatre of fantasy and shock" and believed that "this sad age needs to be dazzled, shaped, and spurred by the spectacle of heroism

* *Curtains*. By KENNETH TYNAN. (Longmans, 42s.)

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... If heroic plays take the stage, life may produce, in honest emulation, its own poor heroes of flesh and fact." Today, ten years later, Mr. Tynan believes he has dropped all this, for he has come to regard the theatre "as a branch of sociology as well as a means of self-expression." The change is not so great as Mr. Tynan thinks, for in both points of view the importance of artistry is less than the importance of being earnest. The shaping of real life heroes is no less sociological than the shaping of radical realists; all that has happened is that the social reformer wishes now to reform in a different way. One stresses this point because it is important to understand that the young missionary's attitude to the arts was the same as the mature missionary's; the playwright's aim must be socially beneficial and a play is to be judged largely by the directions it takes and the conclusions it reaches.

THE CONCLUSIONS reached by the plays Mr. Tynan saw in his early years as a critic were so drab, pointless and uninteresting that the reader of his reviews can feel nothing but sympathy for what Mr. Tynan's enthusiasm had to suffer. All through these years he searched passionately and honourably for *interesting* plays; he soon forgot, one may guess, to demand plays that would shape heroes, since such plays were non-existent; all he asked was to be excited into feeling that life was worth living. His rudeness when faced week after week by the most ordinary kinds of plays was well justified and well expressed—indeed, very few plays were as dramatic as Mr. Tynan's reviews of them. The real play, one felt, was taking place not on the stage but in Mr. Tynan's aisle seat, and the theatre's ignominy rarely failed to be the *Observer*'s triumph. Then, as for many years afterwards, Mr. Tynan looked to eloquent words for vitality, and when a play failed to provide these, Mr. Tynan's insults never failed to make good the lack. Faced, as he was very occasionally, with a playwright who enjoyed words, or, as happened much more frequently, an actor who spoke well and acted forcefully and subtly, Mr. Tynan's prose rose to the occasion almost too gratefully. "Miss Bloom's candour is as still as a smoke-ring and as lovely"; "Hector's scenes ... ring in the mind like doubloons flung down on marble"; "... the manic riot of his prose ... builds a verbal bawdy-house where words mate and couple on the wing, like swifts." This has been cleaned up in recent years: Mr. Tynan's adjectives still couple, but more on the ground; his increased severity of mind has been accepted by his wings.

ONE OF THE NICEST and most natural things about Mr. Tynan's first five years of critical quest was his spasmodic hope, which burst out in directions which may seem strange now but were perfectly reasonable then. In *The Deep Blue Sea* he detected "a heart-pricking strength of purpose with which I had never before credited Mr. Rattigan," while Charles Morgan's *The River Line* was "incontestably the finest play since *The Deep Blue Sea*." Graham Greene's *The Living Room* was the work of "a potentially great dramatist" and "the best first play of its (English) generation," while Noel Coward's "best things" were credited with "the staccato, blind impulsiveness of a machine gun." "I have heard him accused," said Mr. Tynan, "of having enervated English comedy.... The truth, of course, is the opposite: Coward took sophistication out of the refrigerator and set it bubbling on the hob." Mr. Tynan is not to be blamed if the Coward manner has ceased to bubble, the Rattigan heart to prick, and the Greene potential become fit only for Mr. Tynan's power of parody. He judged by what he saw and had no way of guessing that in a year or two he would discover the plays that really mattered to him. In 1954, he could still imply the object of his quest by saying: "Our dramatists ... will wear gags and blinkers, spread half-truths and smoke-screens—anything rather than stare life in the face." But what "life" was exactly, and what it should look like on the stage, was still a puzzle to him and he propounded various solutions which, by their variance with one another, suggest that each was snatched at hopefully but was destined, like the chosen playwrights, to be discarded.

> "The greatest plays are those which convince us that men can occasionally speak like angels."
>
> "Good drama, of whatever kind, has but one mainspring—the human being reduced by ineluctable process to a state of desperation."
>
> "I shall reserve my cheers for the play in which man among men, not against men, is the well-spring of tragedy."
>
> "Let the Hjalmars of the world keep their illusions: no price is too high for the postponement of despair."
>
> "For me the two parts of *Henry IV* are the twin summits of Shakespeare's achievements. Lime-hungry actors have led us always to the tragedies, where a single soul is spotlit and its agony explored; but these private torments dwindle beside the Henries, great public plays in which a whole nation is under scrutiny and on trial."
>
> "By all the known criteria, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* is a dramatic vacuum ... [But it appeals] to a definition of drama much more fundamental than any in the books. A play, it asserts and proves, is basically a means of spending two hours in the dark without being bored."

This has always been the *whimsical* side of Mr. Tynan, for better and for worse. His

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dogmatic lurches in conflicting directions have done much to keep his mind open, and much to confuse the minds of his readers. And he has experienced the same fitfulness when he has tried to define his function as a critic.

> "I see myself predominantly as a lock. If the key, which is the work of art, fits snugly into my mechanism of bias and preference, I click and rejoice; if not I am helpless. . . . Sometimes . . . a masterpiece . . . batters down the door, and enters unopposed; and when that happens . . . I cave in *con amore*."

This is all very feminine; but it shows a certain sloppiness. A critic can be didactic or helpless, but it is wrong for him to play the former and plead the latter. His brain should be active all the time—particularly if, as Mr. Tynan declares elsewhere: "The true critic cares little for here and now . . . his real rendezvous is with posterity."

THE ARRIVAL of *Mother Courage* (1955) was the turning point for Mr. Tynan and his lock. Brecht's "epic" view coincided exactly with Mr. Tynan's preference for the epical Shakespeare, and because "behind its every line . . . there beats a passionate desire to improve the human condition," Mr. Tynan's questing humanitarianism was satisfied as well. He had not liked "propaganda" before, but now, he found, he did, particularly as Brecht's helped towards "the postponement of despair." And a year later, the arrival of *Look Back in Anger* completed Mr. Tynan's quest. Everything was there—the stream of words that Mr. Tynan had always loved, the absence of drawing-room refinements, the spirit of young England expressed in "the drift towards anarchy [and] instinctive Leftishness," plus the thrill of seeing "the sex war and the class war on . . . one and the same stage." "Jimmy Porter," Mr. Tynan wrote joyously, "is the completest young pup in our literature since Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." This remains the most puzzling of all his comparisons.

In the years that have followed this happy moment, Mr. Tynan has been much more settled. The advancement of humanity has been his principal dramatic test and he has had very decided ideas about what advancement is and what it is not. Mr. Beckett and M. Ionesco, both of whom made excellent first impressions on Mr. Tynan, have gone the way of Terence Rattigan and Noel Coward: far from postponing human despair they have expressed it. For the same reason, Pirandello's theories have been rejected as "at once frivolous and despondent" and Strindberg's "nihilistic philosophy" as "untruth." Propaganda, desirable when radically directed, has become "special pleading" and objectionable when emitted by a Roman Catholic such as Mr. Greene, while the "inner anguish" of the writer which once made O'Neill commendable has become selfish in Tennessee Williams. The drama of T. S. Eliot cannot be countenanced, partly because it is too "glacial," but chiefly because it is phrased in verse, a medium which Mr. Tynan considers as impractical as the "lofty, lapidary, 'mandarin' style of writing," which is now superseded by "Prose that has its feet on the ground." More recently, Mr. Tynan has dismissed Aeschylus on the grounds that Freud's interpretations have explained the problems that vexed the Greeks.

This makes an interesting list of unsatisfactory playwrights, particularly if one turns to see which plays and playwrights Mr. Tynan admires and for what reasons he admires them. Brecht, of course, is the first of these, first in the line of today's "true healers," first among those who would substitute public trials for private agonies. But the other favourites are a mixed lot. After seeing Mr. Wesker's *Roots*, Mr. Tynan "stumbled out in a haze of emotion, on a sticky, baking July evening." Mr. Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* excited his hopes for humanity by providing "a life-embracing chorus called 'There's no place on earth like the world' " and "a rousing number entitled 'Oh death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling, oh grave, thy victor-ee!' " A "penetrating freshness of . . . vision" combined with innate "respect for ordinary people" in *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* gave a place in the theatre to the "simple human being" for the first time since the English drama "lost sight of it in the fifteenth century." *South Pacific*—"the first musical romance I have ever seen which was seriously involved in an adult subject"—allowed Mary Martin to "[pour] her voice directly into that funnel to the heart . . ." and broke Mr. Tynan down: "I wept . . ." (this, admittedly, was in 1951). As for Miss Pearl Buck's *A Desert Incident*, Mr. Tynan admitted that "it would be awfully easy to write a flip, sardonic review of it." But he could not do so because though it was a perfectly awful play, Miss Buck had chosen "the most important subject in the world"—the atomic bomb—"and though she handled it vaguely and emotionally, she came down on the side of life."

These are not, of course, the only contemporary writers whom Mr. Tynan has liked: his odd collection includes Arthur Miller (whose prose is "gnarled, whorled in its gleaming like a stick of oak"), N. F. Simpson ("pure plutonium . . . rarer than gold"), M. Genet (whose *The Balcony* "is a theatrical experience as startling as anything since Ibsen's revelation . . . that there was such a thing as syphilis"); Miss

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Shelagh Delaney ("a Lancashire girl who is well over six feet tall" and displays "a boisterous appetite for tomorrow"). But they help to show that in deciding to "come down on the side of life," Mr. Tynan has become more like a key than a lock. Active, keen and vigorous, he goes to the theatre to find out if a play is prepared to corroborate his opinions. The lock is now, as it were, removed from the critic and screwed onto the playwright.

Two POINTS may be stressed in this respect. The first is that every critic must recognise in himself the spirit of didacticism that inspires Mr. Tynan; the second is that Mr. Tynan's particular brand of it has nearly always gone with an intelligence that has done more good than harm. One may detest many of the reasons Mr. Tynan gives for disliking a play, but only rarely does one fail to agree with his dislike of it. The trouble is that it is only the rare occasions that really matter, there being so few good writers and good plays, and it is upon these rarities that Mr. Tynan's uplifting dogma bears down very hardly indeed.

Instead of arguing against the sociological approach, let us accept Mr. Tynan's criterion and agree that the healing of suffering and the advancement of humanity are essential elements of good art. The first thing we must do in adopting this attitude is to make clear to ourselves precisely what virtues are best fitted to fulfilling this honourable aim. Goodness of heart and the desire to go on living are, we decide, among those virtues, and as they are present in Miss Pearl Buck, we refuse to put her bad writing to the test of critical intelligence. As Strindberg, however, seems not to care very much about the joys of living or the continuance of the human race, we ignore any quality that may be present in his writing and deny him the handshake we have given to Miss Buck. Other virtues which we feel will advance humanity are racy gusts of colloquial language and a cheery gift of optimistic song: these qualities allow Mr. Brendan Behan and Rogers and Hammerstein a place beside Miss Buck that must be denied to such as Pirandello and Mr. T. S. Eliot. The postponement of despair being another helpful virtue in the advancement of humanity, we can include Mr. Samuel Beckett for one play and throw him out for another; while M. Ionesco, who strongly deters human advancement by doubting the possibility of human communication, cannot ever hold to our heart the highly communicative funnel of Miss Mary Martin or fill us with the boisterous optimism of Miss Shelagh Delaney. But perhaps we value above all a certain radical passion for plain people and must always love the zeal with which a dramatist sets out to show the ruinous effects of capitalism and capitalists upon such persons; in this case, Brecht must not only be our most-favoured dramatist but must never be inspected with critical care. If there is any badness in his goodness, it must be overlooked, much as the goodness in Miss Buck's badness must *not* be overlooked.

IT WILL BE SEEN that though the following of such a star may heal and advance humanity in some respects, it may set it back considerably in others. To begin with, it entails a general lowering of artistic standards, to allow the good-hearted fumblers a place in the pantheon. It sets such a high value upon optimism that this likeable trait becomes not only an obligatory tenet but the principal test of intellect and intelligence. It restricts the writer to a view of life that has been laid down by the critic, and it restricts the critic to a fixed range of perception beyond which he cannot allow himself to see or think. None of this is likely to be advantageous to humanity.

The sociological criterion of art is identical to the "realistic" manner of making art. Both the sociologist and the realist like a direct approach to virtue and a straightforward boosting of human endeavour. They expect the playwright to aim his work at social betterment of an obvious kind—the levelling of classes, the banning of atomic bombs, the curing of syphilis, the reforming of unjust conditions. They argue that since people must hope in order to live, the playwright must encourage them to hope, and they assume that all such hope is best expressed by playwrights whose minds do not outrun the bedside manner of a provincial doctor.

The playwright, unfortunately, does not usually believe that this is the best way of doing good work. He thinks that art for art's sake is of first importance, for reasons that seem sensible and obvious to him. In the first place, he wants to maintain the highest possible standard in his writing and to express as well as he possibly can a view of life which he finds interesting and even absorbing. If, like Strindberg, he finds his own view alarming and horrible, he goes to enormous pains to present it as such, caring not at all how much he depresses his audience or how bad an impression he makes on optimistic people. As for his style, he either chooses the one that comes best from him or the one that is best suited to his material; what he does not do on any account is to set out to duplicate an existing style. If he is convinced that there is a place for poetry in the theatre, he will struggle to write dramatic poetry, regardless of how often he is told that this is not

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the right way nowadays. If he finds that the theatre is abounding in racy vernacular and breezy songs about death's stings, he may well turn to a prose of extreme coldness and "mandarin" hauteur, this being a precise and intelligent form of expression and a highly effective way of snubbing verbose exhilaration. Finally, if most of his contemporaries are hard at work promoting miscegenation, denouncing capitalism and inspiring immense quantities of hope, he will feel that this is just the time to work out his own point of view as clearly as possible and carry his highly individual thoughts as far as they will go, even if they frighten him to death.

This is art for art's sake. This is what goes on in an ivory tower. Does it heal pain? Does it advance humanity? Well, let us not claim too much for it. Let us just say rather drily that it promotes independence, personal honesty, intelligence, high standards of art and thoughtfulness. These qualities can encourage the critic to attempt, "in honest emulation," a standard of criticism which posterity will think is worth a rendezvous.

The Colossus

I shall never get you put together entirely,
Pieced, glued, and properly jointed.
Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles
Proceed from your great lips.
It's worse than a barnyard.

Perhaps you consider yourself an oracle,
Mouthpiece of the dead, or of some god or other.
Thirty years now I have laboured
To dredge the silt from your throat.
I am none the wiser.

Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of lysol
I crawl like an ant in mourning
Over the weedy acres of your brow
To mend the immense skull-plates and clear
The bald, white tumuli of your eyes.

A blue sky out of the Oresteia
Arches above us. O father, all by yourself
You are pithy and historical as the Roman Forum.
I open my lunch on a hill of black cypress.
Your fluted bones and acanthine hair are littered

In their old anarchy to the horizon-line.
It would take more than a lightning-stroke
To create such a ruin.
Nights, I squat in the cornucopia
Of your left ear, out of the wind,

Counting the red stars and those of plum-colour.
The sun rises under the pillar of your tongue.
My hours are married to shadow.
No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel
On the blank stones of the landing.

Sylvia Plath

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NOTES & TOPICS

Self-Portraiture

Some Notes on a Modern Industry

A PAINTER engaged on a self-portrait has only himself to consider; a writer is bound to drag in other people, and can hardly avoid beliefs, ideas, and principles. The complexity and responsibility of writing about oneself have not prevented autobiography from becoming a busy industry. It is a modern industry: even Cellini, Cardano, and Montaigne seem not far away.

James M. Osborn, who edited the first sustained autobiography written by an Englishman—Thomas Whythorne—has remarked how surprising it is that the autobiographical form took so long to develop, since it is "as obvious," he says, "as the safety pin." He does well to compare autobiography to the safety-pin. It holds together a good many rags and tatters without which many a personality would either be sadly bare or not noticed at all.

In our time autobiographies are constantly written in great numbers by all sorts of persons, young and old, few of them fit to be called writers. Why? There is nothing new in the cult of personality, but mass mediums of communication have made it gigantic, various, and lucrative as never before.

Some autobiographers write because they feel they have not been noticed enough, or at all, by any public. There is nothing to prevent them trying to salvage and advertise their little selves.

Old ideals of reticence have decayed or disappeared. Scott, in the *Lives of the Novelists*, tells how he has been left a lot of papers and letters by Anna Seward and explains that he is not going to make them public. "Nothing," he writes, "less important than the ascertainment of historical fact justifies withdrawing the veil from the incidents of private life." Why, even the expression "private life" is something one no longer hears, and nowadays the sound of veils being withdrawn is almost deafening. The trouble is that what is revealed is generally banal.

There is nothing new in the love of gossip or in the pleasure of talking about oneself. What is new is the accepted notion that there is nothing ignoble about public and printed gossip and egoism.

The taboo on sex has also gone—rather quickly, it may seem to the middle-aged. If you have a dirty mind you can make a clean breast of it. But candour about sex, in some ways a triumph, is a mixed blessing. It has now become sadly conventional, more perhaps in fiction than in autobiography. Novels nowadays are full of detailed accounts of physical intercourse written by persons who describe it as if they were stout Cortez giving his first impressions of the Pacific. They seem to presume that nobody before them has ever had so much as a glimpse of it. If this ingenuousness is less frequent in autobiography, that may be for reasons of self-defence.

IT IS AMUSING that booksellers and librarians who have a habit of dividing books into fiction and non-fiction should classify autobiographies as non-fiction. We know that novels are full of experiences taken straight from life. We know that the autobiographer has to be selective, that his selectiveness is arbitrary, and that omission and emphasis may cause distortion, if not fiction. Honesty and imagination are as rare as good autobiographies. We all, or nearly all, delude ourselves as well as other people. Plutarch said that if the virtue "Know thyself" were easily attainable by anybody, it would not have been regarded as a divine precept. Wise man, he wrote about others.

A distinction must be made between autobiographies and diaries, which are a sort of instant autobiography. And perhaps a distinction ought to be maintained between the autobiography and the case-history, one being intended as a work of art, the other as a document.

In autobiography there is sometimes crude candour or exhibitionism; there is, necessarily, a good deal of discretion, caution, or reserve. You may be able to write an autobiography for love or for money; it is less easy to write one about love or money.

Although people's energies and passions are often more involved with money than with love, it is remarkable how little and how seldom autobiographers allude to money—or novelists either, for that matter.

Money used to be a thing from which one must not "withdraw the veil." It was a thing one of course had, but did not allude to in polite society—a sort of private part, necessary of course, pleasant and useful, but private. It is not modesty or refinement that stops people from writing about their finances: it's self-defence.

If you admit in print that you have got money, somebody is sure to try and get some of it away from you. Also, you will arouse envy. If you write that you are poor, you will be thought a fool for not being able to make money. If you write that you used to be rich and are now poor, you will be a self-confessed waster and booby. If you let it be known that

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you have risen from poverty to riches by your own efforts, you will be marked as pushing, self-seeking, and boastful. If you have got rich by gambling or speculation, you will be regarded as lucky—undeservedly lucky; if by inheritance or legacies or gifts, then you must be a drone, a schemer, or a sponge.

ALL THIS WAS neatly dealt with long ago by Gibbon in his autobiography. "I shall not expatiate on my economical affairs," he wrote.

> It is a rule of prudence as well as of politeness, to reserve such confidence for the ear of a private friend, without exposing our situation to the envy or pity of strangers; for envy is productive of hatred, and pity borders too nearly on contempt.

But autobiographers do sometimes write about money. In his first volume, *Sowing*, Leonard Woolf has told how, when he was eleven, his father, a successful Q.C., suddenly died, leaving his mother badly off, with nine children. A little rancour about this might have been excusable, but there is no sign of it. Mr. Woolf goes on to explain how at various times of his life he has been extremely poor, moderately well-off, or very well-off, and that these variations have been unimportant:

> Though money or its absence made a considerable superficial difference to one's way of life and the volume and quality of one's possessions, I cannot see that it ever had any great or fundamental effect upon my happiness or unhappiness.

Like J. S. Mill, Mr. Woolf evidently holds the conviction that happiness is "the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life."

Happiness, or its absence, seldom seems to be the main theme of autobiographies by politicians, generals, men of action, and careerists of various kinds: they are concerned more with the acquisition and maintenance of power, and their main motive often seems to be self-justification or self-assertion. The motive of more imaginative autobiographers seems nearer to a wish to define and explain where they stand in relation to the rest of the world.

IN A FORMAL or stable society or orthodox community where social values, status, and obligations seemed fixed and are little in dispute, there is unlikely to be much inducement to explain on paper what sort of person one is, how one got that way, and what one has been doing with one's time. But when a man in some well-organised and worldly society becomes acutely conscious of his own distinctiveness, he may feel driven, like Boswell or Gibbon, to explain himself on paper.

In some desperately hard-working, unified, and progressive society like that of China at the present day, there can surely be little prospect for autobiography unless it is of use as political propaganda. In such a society, emphasis upon oneself must be regarded as improper almost to the point of treason. But in the West the mainspring of all the best autobiographies seems to be unconformity.

Any man in the West over fifty has had to try and establish or maintain his identity through a fantastically vast and rapid revolution. He has had to adapt himself to flying, films, television, the replacement of the oat-eating horse by the petrol-drinking motor-car, nuclear fission, the decline of British imperialism, the influence of Marx and Freud, the awakening of Russia, China, and Africa, and the consequences of the two largest and most wasteful wars in history, accompanied by a revival of ingenious and large-scale atrocities in which science has given cruelty the support it used to get from superstition. Now that science offers a prospect of hazardous space-travel to bleak destinations in order to avoid universal destruction, old-world superstition seems almost restful. But there is no rest for the autobiographer. He wants to put on record what he has known of life, and his disagreements with the world, before even more sweeping changes in society, politics, ideas, and the technique of living sweep him and his memories and perhaps his beliefs, whether inherited or acquired, away for good.

Naturally in a revolutionary time the usual gulf between the middle-aged and the young becomes far wider, even uncrossable. And middle-aged autobiographers, since they are looking back, are not likely to write about that gulf but about the gulf that used to exist between themselves when young and the generation before them.

One can't help noticing that they are far more likely to be men than women. Why is this? Do men write autobiographies because they are vainer and more self-important than women? Or are women too busy just living? Or is it that women tend more to preserve established values and men to upset them, whether in a destructive or creative way, or a mixture of both?

Whatever the reason, one finds that while it is very unusual for women to write books explaining how unsatisfactory their mothers were, and how little able to understand them, men keep writing books complaining about their fathers. A number of living English autobiographers seem to have taken their cue from A. E. Housman:

> *Oh, when shall I be dead and rid*
> *Of the wrong my father did?*

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Love-hate relationships between sons and fathers are now more clearly understood, but they are not new. Spirited sons have always tended to rebel against heavy fathers; they now rebel in print. And a dead father makes a convenient scapegoat for one's own grievances and weaknesses: show him up! let him take the blame! It is perhaps seldom easy to be an estimable father: whatever one does will be seen by one's offspring, sooner or later, to be foolish or fiendish. But it is doubtful whether the conspicuousness of the father-and-son theme in English autobiography to-day is anything more than a symptom of rapid changes.

TO GIVE ADVICE to a prospective autobiographer might be as useless as other forms of advice-giving. And yet one might say, it is all very well to cast an indulgent eye back on your own career, but the world was going strong before you came into it. Suppose your father *was* foolish or fiendish—well, he was human. Are you never unwise yourself? Ask yourself, How did Daddy get like that? Try and find out who ruined *his* character. Can it have been that *he* had father-trouble too? Get after those grandparents on both your father's and your mother's side: ferret them out, with all their idiosyncrasies. But remember that whatever you write or omit to write about your family is absolutely certain to annoy some member of it: there is no greater difference in the world than that between what we think of our relations and what they think of themselves.

Allow yourself (we might say) a little irony about yourself. Remember that the world doesn't revolve, so far as can at present be discovered, round your own navel. And do avoid the more blatant kind of lying: it is apt to show. Imaginative truth is not the same thing as scientific truth, but there is a difference between imaginative truth and lying. I know of at least two autobiographies of our time which contain blatant untruths, and are so much the worse for them. These untruths were meant to shed glory on the writers, but they seem a display of mendicant weakness, a beggar's twisted leg or open sores thrust forward.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IS, OR OUGHT TO BE, an exercise in definition. Is it not an effort to see and show more clearly what life is like, to understand more clearly what one has been trying to do with it, and to know more exactly how it has involved one with other people—not only those who are alive now, but the dead, and those not yet born? And to write one's autobiography is the work of a free man. That a man should be able to write of his own life and thoughts is much, that he should be free to publish what he writes is something very precious. Even if he is hopelessly dull, he is at least free to make that perfectly plain to everybody.

William Plomer

The Nostalgic, the Narkers, and the Knowing

By Richard Hoggart

THE articles by Irving Kristol, J. G. Weightman, and Kingsley Amis in ENCOUNTER (July, August, September 1960) raise several important questions about mass society and mass culture. But more than anything else they seem to me to raise, directly or by implication, the question of responsibility within such a society: responsibility for understanding better its general drift, responsibility for improving that general movement, and in particular the responsibility of intellectuals within it.

There is a lot of British writing about mass culture but not much that is both sustained and broadly based. At present those of us who write in the subject are not very effective. So we are quickly and with some justice called highbrow narkers (as by Mr. Amis). Or we are accused of being on the one hand puritanical and on the other nostalgic for a past that never was... for a time of calm aristocratic order or for a comely but enclosed working-class culture.

Thus Mr. Weightman points out that "skiffle in the suburbs, however feeble, is preferable to the maintenance of Cockney social conditions." Certainly, we reply at once, though adding that most of us would regard skiffle primarily as a

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reaction from mass culture, not an instance of it. But we cannot have made our distinctions fine enough, for the reminder is a frequent one. Mr. Richard Wollheim, in a recent number of *Partisan Review*, also observed that anyone who wrote about the strengths of "older" working-class life had to define his position with great care if he were not to be accused of a fruitless archaism.

Still, all three ENCOUNTER articles do agree that modern mass society shows some disturbing features, to put it no more strongly. That mass society shows the following qualities is agreed, in each case, by at least two out of the three writers:

1. It makes for a *processing* of experience (*e.g.* through sustained and centralised advertising—though that is only one pressure). "Mass-culture is often . . . processed and anonymous," says Mr. Weightman. "Commercial television is the greatest single vulgarising influence in our national life," says Mr. Amis, before biting back what he calls the "over-obvious" statement.

2. In large, centralised and technological societies local centres of community are weakened and there is a loss of "an everyday organic context" (the quoted phrase is Mr. Weightman's). The admen come in and create a dream-world acceptable to almost all but really nourishing to none. Mass-culture "synthetically" allows man to feel he is able to "commune with society as a whole" (Mr. Weightman again). But, it is implied, a real community or public sense is weakened.

3. Nevertheless, the world of mass culture should not simply be narked about by highbrows. It has powerful symbolic—emotional—meanings. This is related to what Mr. Weightman calls "the anguish behind so much modern art," an anguish he rightly sees reflected in mass culture. As an instance, he points to the "literature of violence" which is expressed at all levels and in all sorts of ways (from Kafka to Hank Janson, we might say, or from existentialist "leaps" to death-by-motorcycle in a black leather jacket).

These points about mass-culture are those which occur prominently in these articles. One could obviously add more. But even these seem to me to make the case for as sustained and as practical an understanding as we can manage to obtain.

THE most striking immediate difference between the three articles is in tone. I think Mr. Weightman more searching than Mr. Amis in his comments but still the two fall roughly on the same side, the side which is against narking or nostalgia or puritanism, the "still, I confess I'm not unduly perturbed . . ." side; and Mr. Kristol falls on the other.

Yet, and this is perhaps related to their tone, Mr. Weightman and Mr. Amis tend to leave their own points against mass culture (the points I listed above) lying around undeveloped; or to tidy them up in rather bathetic ways; or to reduce them with a clever twirl. Thus, on processing and advertising, Mr. Weightman agrees that it is a "disgrace"—and would like to ban public advertising because it is untidy, "a litter of sub-artistic junk"! Further, he points out that some sex-advertising has an element of comic self-caricature. A useful point; yet most of the puritans know also (*a*) that the self-caricature is a tiny fringe element, and (*b*) that it is only a further form of processing, designed to tickle the more sophisticated palate—like watered-down Picasso in shop-window dressing.

And Mr. Amis, after his incautious onslaught on commercial television (a most powerful advertising medium) makes what he himself has to call his "modest objection to what advertising has been getting up to"—that it employs young men who might have made good teachers!

To return to the expression of violence. Any writer on mass culture, it is true, should try to understand the links between the motor-cyclists and the masses of sex-and-violence paperbacks. But more important he should try to see the differences (Thom Gunn's *The Sense of Movement* is a good corrective to the tendency to put them in one box). The problem really becomes interesting when one sees that there may be a kind of life in one and a synthetic processing in the other.

MEANWHILE, AN IRONY keeps coming into my mind. Mr. Weightman, without examining and defining it, asserts the fact of "processing" in modern society. He was prevented at the last minute from attending the Berlin conference of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. If he had been there, I think he would have been struck by the enormous difficulty of explaining what he meant by this word to many of the very intellectuals who study mass culture, and chiefly to those with a sociological-scientific rather than a literary-imaginative training. Obviously he is free to question the literary narkers and nostalgics as much as he wishes. But I wish he would also take time to make his point about "processing" thoroughly, as a literary man, to those without his background.

Perhaps almost all of us would agree on these basic premises:

1. Given a modern society which offers unexampled physical advantages and individual opportunities and which is therefore to be welcomed:

2. given the decline of traditional class/culture lines of influence and of the cohesion of older local groups; and given that we none of us want a new managerial authority, sustained and lubri-

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cated by the mass media of communication (Mr. Weightman's organisation men):

3. it is particularly important not to fall into Mr. Weightman's opposite extreme—the "Beatnik"—which I take to mean becoming a dissident, exhibitionist, marginal individual.

But how can one help to resist the emerging of a processed society? Is it possible to work towards a society which will be free from the class-and-culture ladders (high, low, and middle, in both brows and classes), classless but not standards-less, individual but also communal, varied and flexible? Without some such hope I would see little cause for cheerfulness. For to look back in longing is no use; and in any case I like, as much as Mr. Amis or Mr. Weightman, many of the possibilities which modern society offers.

BUT then much else seems to follow. It follows, for instance, and I am taking a word from Mr. Amis, that we must work for a much more widely diffused *self-consciousness*.

Mr. Amis spends much of his time attacking one form of self-consciousness, the intellectual's exacerbated self-consciousness about the dangers of mass society. This is a danger, it is true. But intellectuals can try to correct their errors by argument amongst themselves. Still, most people are not "intellectuals". Mr. Amis, hating the sight of exacerbated self-consciousness, hopes that we shan't see "the extinction of unself-consciousness." And much of his argument against the wide extension of university education (most people just can't take it) can without violence, I think, be related to his hope here.

Look for a long time at the advertisements directed not at the sophisticated but at *most* people. What strikes you most strongly is their emotional and intellectual *ingenuousness*, their cruel, hard-selling huckster's or door-to-door salesman's driving simplicity. How can anyone swallow that, the sophisticate says . . . and quickly decides that they don't. He reaches for a handy generalisation—with which, suitably qualified, most of the narkers would agree—that "ordinary people" have a good deal more sensible, bloody-minded resistance and resilience than we always realise.

STILL, THE ADMEN are not fools, and they seem to be having practical success in selling their goods by this method. So presumably some of the "processed" attitudes they peddle are having their effect too. We need only re-read Shakespeare to remember that the huckster's hard but simple sell is not new. But in the interim much effort has gone into trying to create a literate democracy. These modern word-wizards, as one result, are often graduates with a usable smattering of applied psychology; intellectual sophisticates gone wrong. No one can operate in this way without having a contempt, conscious or hidden, for individual human beings. (So again one recalls Mr. Amis's "modest objection" to modern mass-communications advertising, that its operators might have made good teachers—in this condition, one would hardly *want* them as teachers.) Again, these are not occasional, shabby, door-to-door salesmen or market-place hucksters, but ubiquitous, centralised, and concentrated. At the best all this will weaken the value of language, and especially the belief in meaningful public speech and communication; at the worst it will assist the appearance of that processed society we *all* seem to dislike.

But what then? If so many people are still so unsophisticated (in their ability to assess some kinds of public communication), what should be done? People will not remain in enclosed working-class communities, singing *"Knees up, Mother Brown,"* all unself-consciously—they have begun to leave those areas already. Will they stay in the living-room, absorbing what Mr. Weightman calls the "mish-mash" from the telly—though that is a kind of "unself-consciousness"? So we come to the case for a far more widely-spread self-consciousness. I believe we can hope to achieve this—that great resources are still untapped in a lot of people. I think these resources can be developed without weakening the more formal and traditional education Mr. Amis is anxious to preserve—and without, for that matter, creating a society of "knowing types." But we will need to find better ways of recognising a variety of talents (more than the 11-plus examination does), and more relevant ways of developing them into the right kind of self-consciousness. Mr. Amis looks like getting even more students quite soon; I wish he would think more about what he positively and properly can offer them, even if many of them prove at the start to know no more than the girl he complains of.

WHAT, last, of the direct responsibilities of intellectuals, *as intellectuals*? Basically, Mr. Kristol is asking for a new clerisy. The old class/culture authorities are falling away, he says; intellectuals and artists have reacted so much against bourgeois values and against the bourgeoisie's moralising reduction of art, that they have rejected all their social responsibilities. In a time of universal literacy and widely-diffused prosperity the admen come in and occupy the empty space. Where is the clerisy?

I agree, of course, with most of Mr. Kristol's diagnosis. But, like Mr. Weightman, I am uneasy about his call for a clerisy. This is partly an instance of the attitudes he has described—modern intellectuals always and instinctively react in this

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way. But it is also due to the fact that Mr. Kristol so little defines the nature and function of a clerisy—and the gap is far more easily filled, in our imagination, with bad instances than with decent workable ones. Something like Mr. Kristol's argument has, of course, been much further followed by T. S. Eliot in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. And that has always seemed to me one of the most difficult conservative arguments to counter. Most people ignore or bypass it; to his credit, Mr. Raymond Williams is one of the few who has tried to meet it. For if we are to hope for a technologically advanced society which is also a democratic society this is precisely the sort of argument we must pursue. It raises, we all know, the most involved questions about intellectual leadership within such a society, its status, its functions, its recruitment, its training, its links with the rest of society; and it would be impossible to pursue them in this space, even if I were competent to do so.

BUT ONE CAN AT LEAST get so far by still sticking to these three ENCOUNTER articles. In challenging Mr. Kristol's argument Mr. Weightman says that a modern society can best function through non-hereditary, self-recreating élites. One doesn't find it difficult to agree, initially. Yet it stops before all the tricky questions. In present circumstances, we know, such people are likely to feel more and more out of touch with what is really driving their society. To be only an "ironic point of light" is really a rather feeble position after all. And a weekly reading of the *New Statesman* and the *Observer* (or a writing for them) can come to seem like going round and round in a charmed yet disenchanted circle, alternately ridden by *"angst"* or quirky at finding yet another clay-foot in the great big outside world. An intellectual has no right to set himself up as a general moral mentor to his society; but he has a job to do, *as an intellectual*: to sustain a critical and creative probing of the life of his time, to maintain and extend that concern for the "reasonable and truthful" which is the very thing Mr. Kristol sees as constantly weakened by the pressures of mass culture.

We know it is not easy to act in this way today. But one or two things can be said at once. The first is: that intellectuals should realise, more than most of them do now, that this *is* one of their responsibilities. And at least two obvious and complimentary kinds of action might follow:

1. To work more within society, actively and pragmatically.
   a. so as to create *institutional safeguards* against the worst—and the worsening—effects of a mass consumers' society. There is no shortage of good issues—in education, in the social services, in the organisation and control of the mass media and elsewhere.
   b. so as to help devise, within the organisations of society, areas which will encourage decent development. The admen are constantly providing new areas for indecent development; it should be possible, without being in any way authoritarian, to make better growing-points available.

(There are many possible examples but one of the best is probably what is usually called the "teenage problem" since teenagers, it is generally agreed, are the most exposed group within modern mass society. If we look at their situation, not so as to register shock nor to be galvanised into the wrong kind of do-goody action; and if we don't patronise teenagers by joining those who are only too easily "unsquare" and "on their side"; if we look, for instance, at evidence as practical as that in Mark Abrams' survey of teenage spending—then we are bound to ask whether the "narrowness" in their spending, which Dr. Abrams himself notes, is a true reflection of their possibilities in a time of unexampled teenage prosperity; to ask whether we would like our own children to be so immersed, if they happened to belong to the large percentage not so comfortably looked after (even in the social provision made for them) by a meritocratic society. We will have to ask too, of course, what their recreations and reactions, motorcycles as well as pop records, say indirectly about their needs and possibilities. If we do all this I don't think we can then simply conclude that society as a whole—the democracy which tries to provide room for its own *best* possibilities, to recall Mr. Kristol's formulation—has nothing to say or to do about the situation, that it must leave teenagers to the admen.

2. To realise that a potential audience for Mr. Kristol's "reasonable and truthful" speech does exist. That this is not only the small number of the "elect" or the "self-exiled" but some part of many of us for some of the time. Britain is an unknown country to far too many of its own intellectuals; and one fact in particular they do not sufficiently appreciate is that all over the country and in all classes there is a reservoir of the right kind of seriousness and concern. The *Observer* and the *New Statesman* have better readers than they always deserve. To reach this audience intellectuals do not have to be solemn or to talk down—nor do they have to perform madly comic back-flips from fear of sounding like a self-appointed clerisy (if they do, they end by sounding like the latest smart copywriter). It's not easy to reach this audience of which many of us can be, from time to time, a part; but it is far more worth the effort than are many of the curious exercises in communication which intellectuals make now.

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Has "Lib-Lab" a Future?

By David Marquand

MR. WOODROW WYATT'S exercise in political matchmaking has ended with both prospective spouses proclaiming their dedication to a life of celibacy. But the underlying problem, which Mr. Wyatt's proposed Liberal-Labour pact was designed to solve, still remains. Instead of swinging from one great party to the other, the pendulum has somehow got stuck in the Liberal no-man's land; and nothing less than a political earthquake seems likely to shift it. A majority of the electorate is opposed to the present Government. But so long as that majority is divided in its present proportions between the two Opposition parties, the Conservatives will be sure of staying in office. Labour has no hope of power unless it can win over a significant number of those whose dislike of the Conservatives has so far stopped short at voting Liberal.

But how? Why do these anti-Conservative voters feel reluctant to move over to the Labour Party, and how can their reluctance be overcome? The proposal that the Liberal and Labour parties should form an electoral pact is not so much an answer to these questions as an attempt to eliminate them. The most obvious objection to it is that it would be unlikely to work unless it were unnecessary. It is because Liberal voters are reluctant to vote Labour that the problem exists; and their reluctance is unlikely to disappear overnight merely because Mr. Grimond signs a pact with Mr. Gaitskell. Liberal voters are not cattle, to be transferred from one camp to another at the nod of their leader. An electoral pact *in itself* offers no guarantee that Liberal voters would vote Labour in the absence of a Liberal candidate. Liberal voters vote Liberal less because they like the Liberal Party than because they dislike the other two; and there is no reason whatever to suppose that their dislike of the Conservatives is any greater than their dislike of the Labour Party. On the contrary, for a party which claims to represent a new Radical force in British politics, the Liberals are disconcertingly popular in the stockbroker belt; and in the absence of solid evidence, one must assume that a pact with the Labour Party would send many of their voters scuttling back for shelter to the Conservatives. As a matter of fact, such evidence as exists supports this assumption. According to the Gallup Poll, slightly more than a third of Liberal voters would vote Conservative if no Liberal candidate were standing, as against slightly under a third who would vote Labour. It is true that a pact between the two parties would work if the Labour Party could so transform itself that it no longer repelled Liberal voters. But if it could do that, a pact would be otiose.

EVEN IF the pact were to succeed, the Labour Party might be sadly displeased by the results. A Labour Government would be in office; but by definition, only with the consent of the Liberals. It might be a minority Government like those of 1924 and 1929, a prospect calculated to send a shudder down every Labour spine. Even if it had a majority in the House of Commons, it and everyone else would know that that majority would disappear at the next election if the Liberals refused to renew the pact. Either way, such a Labour Government would be the prisoner of its Liberal allies. Inevitably the Liberals would demand a price; and there is not much doubt what their price would be. The only sensible strategy for the Liberal Party in these circumstances would be to insist on a scheme of electoral reform. (It is worth remembering that the Liberals did just this to the unhappy Labour Government of 1929; and that the country was saved from the Alternative Vote only by the collapse of the Government.) But electoral reform—whether full-scale proportional representation or only the Alternative Vote—would almost certainly make the Liberals the permanent arbiters of British politics.

There is no doubt that this would be a disaster. As every first-year Politics student knows, a two-party system puts a premium on moderation, since both parties have to compete for the votes of the uncommitted in the centre. But in a three-party system the centre votes go to the centre party. The other parties are able to gain additional votes only by appealing to extremist groups on their fringes. But since it is almost impossible for either of the two more extreme parties to win an independent over-all majority, in the end the centre party usually holds the balance. Under a system of this kind, therefore, the actual performance of the Government is likely to be moderate enough; but there is almost

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certain to be a wide gulf between that performance and election-day rhetoric. Butskell would be permanently in power; but elections would be fought in the language of Michael Foot and the Suez rebels. This sort of gulf occurs under all systems, of course; but it would be much wider under a three-party system than it is now —with a consequent increase in political humbug, cynicism, and irresponsibility.

THAT IS PERHAPS a rather abstract and theoretical objection to a Liberal-Labour Pact. A more fundamental one is the character and ideology of the two parties. The argument for the pact is based on the assumption that the two parties have more in common with each other than either has with the Conservatives. In many respects, of course, they have. Both are, in an elusive but important sense, "anti-Establishment." Both believe that they represent progress; and both believe that progress is a good thing to represent. Both are happiest when they can view politics, and particularly foreign politics, in terms of morality rather than in terms of power. Both profess similar policies on a limited range of specific issues.

But there the resemblance ends. In ideology and character the two parties are fundamentally distinct. It is true that the Liberal Party frequently talks a language suspiciously reminiscent of that of the Right-wing of the Labour Party. On closer inspection, however, it almost always turns out that the grammar and syntax are altogether different. Like the Right-wing of the Labour Party, the Liberals stand for "pragmatic" reforms, for greater "efficiency", and in particular for regarding public ownership as "an instrument and not an end in itself". Superficially, then, Liberal reformism looks as though it might have been borrowed from the pages of Mr. Anthony Crosland and Mr. Douglas Jay. But there is a vital difference between Crosland's reformism and that of the Liberal Party. Crosland's reforms are, so to speak, *for* something; the Liberal Party's appear totally unrelated to any vision of society as a whole. The truth is that Messrs. Crosland and Jay have been pushed by the bitterness of their opponents in the Labour Party into sounding more Right-wing than they really are. In the true sense they are not pragmatists at all. Their reforms are designed, not only to make society work more efficiently, but to transform it. They have abandoned many of the traditional techniques of socialism, but not its traditional goals.

PARALLEL TO THE ideological gulf between the Liberal and Labour parties there runs a much deeper gulf of attitude and atmosphere. The Liberals are, in a profound sense, an irresponsible party. Their proudest boast, indeed their whole *raison d'être*, is that they are not tied to the great power blocks of modern society, that they are a party of individuals and not of interests. Because of this, Liberal propaganda, Liberal party conferences, Liberal speeches, all have an incurably frivolous air. One never has the sense, when listening to one of Mr. Grimond's speeches or reading Liberal policy statements, that what one is reading or listening to has been hammered out through a slow process of give-and-take, by representatives of great vested interests. Even at their silliest (and God knows they can be catastrophically silly), Labour Party conferences give an impression of rootedness, of representing a wider constituency than that fortuitously gathered in the conference hall. The Liberal Party, by contrast, seems to have no roots. Indeed, there is a sense in which it is not a political party at all, but an anti-political party. Its ideology, in so far as it has one, is characterised by a pervasive disdain for the unpleasant realities of social and political conflict and a refusal to admit that society is made up of opposing groups. Its voters are attracted to it because it offers an escape from the crude and noisy clash of warring interests; its members join it because they are unwilling to dirty their hands in the drab and sometimes sordid task of harnessing social forces for political ends.

In particular they join it because they are unwilling to face the fact that any progressive party in a democratic industrial society must, of necessity, depend for funds on the trade unions and must, in consequence, be partly controlled by the trade unions. This unwillingness was, after all, the principal reason for the collapse of the Liberal Party in the first three decades of this century. The trade unions did not set up the Labour Party because they were Socialists, but because they were slowly convinced that they would not be given what they wanted by the Liberals. An implicit hostility to organised labour is still the distinguishing characteristic of the Liberal Party; and it can be seen at its most perfect in the almost automatic response of the liberal Press to industrial disputes. Whenever there is a strike, above all an unofficial strike, the instinctive liberal response is to point out sourly that strikes are an "inefficient" way of settling disputes, or that strikes "inconvenience the public," or that strikers ought not to be beastly to those of their mates who wish, doubtless in accordance with the noblest precepts of liberal individualism, to act as blacklegs. Behind these instinctive responses there lies, I believe, a fundamental failure to comprehend the brute facts of industrial life: in

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particular a blushing refusal to admit that conflict between opposing interests is endemic and natural; that under any system the interests of management conflict with the interests of Labour; and that Labour can only further its interests by collective action, including where necessary the use of industrial force.

BUT IF A Liberal-Labour pact is to be ruled out, what is the alternative? How else can the Labour Party win over the uncommitted votes it needs? The sad truth is that the factors which rule out an electoral agreement with the Liberals also make an independent Labour victory unlikely. We have heard a great deal in the last two years of the need for a face-lift on the Left. The Labour Party, we have been told, is unlikely to win another election unless it sheds its commitment to wholesale nationalisation on the 1945 pattern, and until it has convinced the electorate of its firm adherence to NATO. All that is true. Unfortunately, however, these are only a small part of the battle. The real reason why white-collar suburbanites are reluctant to vote Labour is that they rightly believe that the Labour Party is a working-class party, and wrongly imagine that a working-class party must be unable to satisfy them. There is, in fact, a curious parallel between the situation of the Labour Party now and that of the Liberals sixty years ago. Just as the Labour Party originally came into existence because the unskilled and semi-skilled workers were not being satisfied by the Liberal Party, so the Liberal Party has won a renewed existence because the growing white-collar class believes that its interests are not being satisfied by the Labour Party.

This is why an earthquake appears to be needed before the political pendulum starts to swing again. It is, of course, conceivable that an earthquake will obligingly appear (though whether it would do the Labour Party any good is more doubtful). The Common Market may lead to a thoroughgoing realignment of forces in British politics, and a full-scale merger between the Liberals and the marketeers in the Labour Party. That, however, seems wildly improbable. Once we have joined the Common Market, the question of whether we should have done so or not will be a dead issue. It is true that if the Labour Party leadership were foolish enough to oppose the treaty when it comes up for ratification a number of Mr. Gaitskell's supporters in the constituencies might desert him. But without massive defections from the parliamentary Labour Party, and above all from the trade unions, these would scarcely amount to a political earthquake.

A MORE PROBABLE earthquake is another deterioration in Labour's parliamentary strength at the next election. If the Conservatives manage to improve their position at a fourth successive election, in spite of their almost Baldwinian torpor and muddle during the past year, the fissiparous tendencies in the Labour Party might become too strong to contain. Both wings of the party would see in the defeat a final proof that their diagnoses had been correct all along. The Left would be able to say, with some justice, that the party's position had got steadily weaker in proportion as its programme got more moderate. The Right would argue, with equal justice, that the responsibility for failure lay with the party's stubborn refusal to make a clean break with old-fashioned nationalisation and its working-class image. One of two things would probably happen. Mr. Gaitskell might be deposed, and the party might move Left. In that case, the Gaitskellites would presumably secede. The other possibility is that the Gaitskellite majority would demand, and obtain, still more energetic moves against the Left. Either way, the party would find it difficult to avoid another instalment of the civil war which has plagued it for the last ten years; and this time, the war might be fought to a finish.

BUT SUPPOSE there is no earthquake. Suppose the Labour Party manages to avoid tearing itself in pieces over the Common Market; and suppose that it gains a reasonable number of seats at the next election, without gaining enough to form a Government. In that case, I believe that the future of the Left in this country will depend less on what the Labour Party does than on what the unions do. The Labour Party's links with the unions are, at present, its greatest strength and at the same time its greatest weakness. It is sometimes said that the moral is that the Labour Party should abandon its working-class image. That is nonsense, for it cannot do so without destroying itself altogether. What can happen, however, is for the unions to change their own image independently of the Labour Party. This, in fact, is already beginning to happen. The unions have faced the problems posed by the wages pause and the establishment of the NEDC "Planning Council" with great tactical skill, and considerable awareness of public relations. The fact is that the unions need the support of the new "white-collar" public just as much as the Labour Party does; and technological change will make that need greater as time goes on. These processes cannot be expected to work quickly, but they are working. Whether they will work quickly enough is a question for the crystal-gazer.

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Dannie Abse

The Grand View

Mystics, in their far, erotic stance,
neglect our vulgar catastrophes.
I, with cadence, rhyme and assonance,
must pardon their oceanic trance,
their too saintlike immoralities.

For I, too, spellbound by the grand view
flung through vistas from this windy hill,
am in pure love. I do not know who
it is that I love but I would flow
into One invisible and still.

Though islanded and inspired by
the merely human, I sing back robes of air
to uncover my ego plundered eye,
abandoning my apostasy,
no more to make a home out of despair.

Only Moses, on the high mountain,
at least knew what he was climbing for.
God haunted, wonderstruck, half insane,
that condemned genius brought down again
ten social poems we call the law.

My littleness makes but a private sound,
the little lyric of a little man;
yet, like Moses, I walk on holy ground
since all earth is, and the world is round
I come back to where he began.

My forehead is open. The horns grow out
and exit. Infirm cynics knock inside,
and still ancestral voices shout
visions, visions! Should I turn about
if by naming all One is denied?

There are moments when a man must sing
of a lone Presence he cannot see.
To undulations of space I bring
all my love when love is happening:
green directions flying back to me.

There are moments when a man must praise
the astonishment of being alive,
when small mirrors of reality blaze
into miracles; and there's One always
who, by never departing, almost arrives.

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No Secret, No Joke

The Dilemma of Commonwealth Writing — By DAN JACOBSON

ON THE FACE OF IT, it should be easy for me to discuss in general terms some of the literary problems or difficulties confronting the writer in the English language from the countries of the Commonwealth, being myself a writer from a country that until very recently was in the Commonwealth; and having as lively a sense of my own problems—being as quick to self-pity—as the next man. Allowing for the immense differences between the countries of the Commonwealth, it does seem to me that writers from each of these countries all have in common with one another certain problems which it may be useful to illustrate, and I hope, to illuminate.

But when one tries to define these problems, one finds oneself caught up in a welter of historical and quasi-literary speculation which very rapidly becomes unmanageable. Any literary discussion leads eventually from literature to questions of morals and ethics, to religion, to history, to sociology; even to geography, I am tempted to say in the present context. But in talking of colonial or Commonwealth writing, one feels more than usually closely hemmed in by the extra-literary considerations which surround all literary discussion. And one feels this for a most disconcerting reason—simply, there is so little Commonwealth literature to talk about. There are no great, established instances around which the discussion can cohere, and from which those taking part in it can measure their distance at any point. It's gratifying to learn that the English Departments of at least two American universities, in Texas and Arkansas, have recently established centres for the study of Commonwealth writing; nevertheless, it remains true to say that in talking about Commonwealth writing one is talking about a subject which does not truly exist. Not yet, at any rate.

This essay is a revised version of a talk originally given to the Doughty Society, Downing College, Cambridge.

Perhaps I can make my point more clearly by pointing to the analogy of the United States. In certain respects the experience in history of the U.S. does resemble that of a country like Australia, say, or even of South Africa. But the area in which discussion of American writing can profitably take place has been defined for us in the most profound and authoritative way possible: it has been defined by the great American writers themselves, who have established certain themes as being characteristic of, or as standing in particular relationship to, the patterns of American experience; it is they who have made American experience available imaginatively to the American people and to the rest of us.

We cannot say this about any "Commonwealth writing" that I am familiar with; not unless we make more allowances than our own best hopes or ambitions should permit. Our points of reference are scattered in isolation; and between them lies that welter of generalisation, a kind of bushveld through which it is very difficult indeed to find one's way. All I can really do is to strike directly into the bushveld, to try and describe some of the general intellectual conditions which must govern literary activity within the Commonwealth countries—at any rate, within those countries which are English-speaking, or partly English-speaking. Inevitably, my descriptions are going to be schematic; and inevitably, too, much of what I am going to say is autobiographical in nature, though not in form.

I HAVE REFERRED to the "intellectual conditions which must govern literary activity within the English-speaking countries of the Commonwealth." What, in my own case, my upbringing having been what it was and having taken place where it did, do I feel to have been these governing conditions? What in my intellectual environment as a South African was specifically related to the country's past as a colonial settlement and

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its status, until recently, within the Commonwealth? There are a number of major conditions which can be baldly enumerated; and they are all very closely interrelated: (1) the absence of a local literature; (2) the absence of any national intellectual tradition; (3) the absence of established and highly-developed social forms; (4) the absence of a local audience; and (5) the condition of exile—which is another way of describing the attractive power of the metropolitan country, of England. The list is rather a melancholy one, put down in this way, but I hope I will find something to say which will alleviate, if not entirely dissipate, the gloom it might seem to portend.

The first condition I mentioned was *the absence of a local literature*; the fact that an English-speaking South African, to take my own example, grows up reading books which for the most part are from and about England; or from and about other countries; but hardly ever about South Africa. A consideration of the surprises, the difficulties, the tensions which are produced by this situation seems to me to lead directly into reflection on the whole nature of the literary activity as such; into reflection on the kind of recognitions and confirmations we seek from writing, both as writers and readers; the compulsions there seem to be upon us of naming the objects we see in the world around us, and of naming our own reactions to them; of enacting in words what we most wish for or fear. However, what I want to emphasise here is simply that for anybody with a literary bent who grows up under the circumstances I have mentioned, the consciousness of a gap or gulf between his reading and the world around him comes very early; it comes with his first nursery rhymes or learning-to-read books. And what those books begin, almost every other book he reads continues. When I think of the kind of book I read as a boy—the comics out of England, the "William" books, books of a more meritorious nature—I know that I was continually and consciously trying to fit them against what I could feel and see in the world immediately around me; and often it was a very difficult task. The difficulty (and the necessity) of the task produces in one's attitude towards the books and towards the world around one a curious doubleness: it produces even in children what I am tempted to call an almost metaphysical preoccupation with "reality." Which was "real"—the world of the books, or the world around one?

It is clear that one of the immediate intellectual consequences of the "doubleness" could be to encourage the use of literature not to interpret the world which one inhabits oneself, but to escape from it. Strangely enough, it is possible to make the escape not only by exaggerating the differences between the world of books and the world one lives in, but also by denying that there are any differences at all; by insisting that "there" and "here" are one country, when they are nothing of the kind. In either case, what we have is an altogether inadequate notion of how closely grounded literature is in the society from which it emerges; and hence an insufficiently energetic conception of the relation between art and life, and what each can do or has done for the other.

But the "doubleness" can have desirable consequences too, especially in the kind of training it can give in self-awareness. A South African or Australian who has any true perception of the complexity, variety, and richness of, say, the English literary tradition, is unlikely to deceive himself that he can simply imbibe the values of the tradition without effort, because of his birth into a particular family or class, or because of the school or university he attended. He knows that he has to work for a sense of the tradition, of its growth and modification through history, and it is possible that he will be more modest about what he has attained through his work than someone who is encouraged to believe that the tradition is available to him as a matter of social or historical right.

MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID applies with equal force to the second of the governing conditions: *the absence of a national intellectual tradition*. I had thought of referring here simply to the absence of a sense of "national identity"; but this seemed to me too narrow a description of what I have in mind. I can best illustrate what I mean by referring, again, to the analogy with the United States, which did develop, very early, its own traditions of moral and political thought. These traditions were certainly closely bound up with the problem of establishing a sense of national identity within the colonies and later in the republic; but it is clear that the American contribution to intellectual history cannot by any means be exhaustively defined in terms of that local problem. And it was in relation to these traditions (or in reaction against them) that the classic American novelists of the 19th century were able to pursue their individual preoccupations or obsessions. In South Africa, in contrast, there are no ideas, at once local and general, which could ratify, restrain, and objectify the competing nationalisms within the country; and it is partly for this reason that even at its best the intellectual life of the country has a haphazard, *extempore* quality about it, which often irritates the mind more than stimulates it, which encourages a kind of foot-loose eclecticism rather than a genuine creativity.

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We have no literature, we have no intellectual tradition, in large measure simply because we have very few people, and those people have not been living long in their country.* And as a result of there having been so few people for so short a time in South Africa, the social fabric has a thinness, a simplicity, a tenuousness which it is difficult to describe, but which one must include in any enumeration of the conditions governing intellectual life in the country. It is this condition which I have called *the absence of established and highly-developed social forms.* We have all read that passage in Henry James's life of Hawthorne in which James compared, from the point of view of the novelist, English society with American; we remember "the compassion" with which James was forced to regard "a romancer" looking for subjects in the "extraordinary blankness" of the American field. (Though we are inclined to forget that James went on to speak of the possibilities which yet remain for the American writer; they are, James wrote, "his secret, his joke, as one might say.") In any case, the "denudation" of the social scene of which James complained can be seen in the society of a country like South Africa, with the further disadvantage I mentioned just a moment ago: the absence of a specific intellectual tradition comparable with that of the United States at the time James wrote, and of which James's *Hawthorne* is in itself most impressive evidence. The social tenuousness, the paucity of accepted social usages, is not something abstract, remote from one's everyday perception of the life around one. It might seem an exaggeration to say that one can hear an echo of it in the South African voice and accent, see a reflection of it even in the South African face; but in fact it is no exaggeration at all. And to think of this is to be reminded too of what I would call the imaginative flatness of the country's streets, of its buildings, even of its landscapes which seem merely to have been scratched and eroded, not developed and moulded, by the people who live among them.

BUT LET US SAY that a South African, emerging from this society, writes a novel about it. Who will read his novel? Some South Africans will, certainly. But most of his audience will be in England or the United States:

* Even the Africans in South Africa have not been settled much longer in the country than the whites: in any case the tribal societies they had established have been all but destroyed over the last generation or two, and the Africans in the cities do give the impression, as much as the whites, of being an uprooted, newly-arrived people.

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there is *no local audience* which is able to sustain him. To whom, then, is the South African novelist addressing himself? The answer is clear, if one looks at most South African novels. He is speaking to the people in London and New York. This mightn't seem to matter very much: after all, we read American novels, Russian, French, Japanese novels. But the novels from these countries were addressed by the novelists primarily to their own peoples; and this is one of their great strengths.* The novelist wanted to present to his own countrymen the people, the landscapes, the social classes, the intellectual impulses, with which they were already familiar, and which he wished to illuminate and re-define for them. The act of writing and the act of reading were conceived of, had to be conceived of, as a form of communion, a mutual exchange. But this it cannot be for the colonial novelist; at least not in the comparatively direct, straightforward way it can be in countries which have audiences able to support and attend to their writers.

At the simplest level, the absence of a local audience encourages that wearisome explaining of local conditions by the novelist (or poet), which on the one side becomes indistinguishable from the deliberate exploitation of local colour, and on the other side leads to prosy interpolations into the structure of the novel or poem. At another level we see colonial writers deliberately seeking for material which they imagine will be "universal" in character; we see them trying to dissociate themselves from the very things in the scene immediately around them which should most be of concern to them. In all the cases referred to, the absence of a local audience to which the writer is answerable, first and last, produces in him the wrong sort of self-consciousness both about his audience and his subject-matter.

And the writers are inclined to gravitate, eventually, to the country they have always read about and where their books are most read. By doing so, they isolate themselves from the society which, however meagre and unsustaining they may have found it, is the only one they really know intimately; they attach themselves to the peripheries (or what they feel to be the peripheries) of a society which will always in some degree remain foreign to them. The gravitation to the metropolis is not something one can simply deplore; it seems to me to arise inevitably out of the circumstances I have previously described. The fifth governing condition which I mentioned earlier was *exile*.

I DID SAY that I would try to dissipate something of the gloom my list of conditions would seem to threaten. It is obvious, however, that it is much easier to describe difficulties than it is to prescribe ways of overcoming them; especially when they are going to be overcome (if they are overcome at all) not through prescriptions but by examples—which, in the nature of the case, must be new and surprising, and must defy the prescriptions laid down for them.

Still, we always feel encouraged when we know that our difficulties are not as peculiar to ourselves as they sometimes seem to be; when we know that the problems we are faced with are not altogether unusual. What I have had to say about the situation of the Commonwealth writer seems to me to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the situation of the writer practically anywhere; and the disadvantages or disabilities under which the colonial suffers are not unlike those which handicap and stimulate his colleagues in England or the United States or elsewhere. For what appear to be difficulties may be described more optimistically, but not absurdly, as opportunities.

Consider "exile." Surely many of the greatest figures in modern literature have been, in a sense, exiles: Conrad, Eliot, Joyce, James, even Lawrence in the later years of his life; exile certainly did not stultify their powers of creation. What was true of them may well be true even of lesser figures, both among those who live as outright exiles, and among those who feel themselves to be exiles, in some measure, within their own countries. Then, too, for a writer to come from anywhere in the Commonwealth to England, to the country I called simply "the country he has always read about"—might that not in itself be a subject for him to ponder over, to work on, to use?

IS THERE ANY NOVELIST TO-DAY who writes with a firm sense of who his audience will be and what they will find familiar or unfamiliar in his work? Is the writer to-day not entitled to seek his community in terms other than those of locality and class; and is it not possible that if he devotes himself to his work, he will find that there will be others, of many races and in many places, who will be ready to perform their parts in the exchange which both sides are seeking? Under the assault of specialised knowledge of all kinds is there any of us who does not feel both intellectually disinherited and set free? Do we not all, under present-day conditions, need a

* The only exceptions I can think of are certain American novels, where one does find an ambiguousness about the audience for whom they are intended. Cooper, for example, seems to write with one eye cocked across the Atlantic.

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measure of that self-awareness which I put forward as one of the most desirable consequences of a colonial education? Can the novelist in a "new" society not find his material in the freedom of movement it offers to him, in the fluidity of its structure, the directness with which people in such a society reveal themselves to one another, the fierceness with which they seek for their own identities? Is it not conceivable that the absence of comment upon the country around him, the absence of a recorded past within it, can in itself be a goad to the colonial writer, and can generate in him a creative excitement which he would not change for the excitements offered to other writers in other countries? And yet, at the same time, is not that excitement always a shared one, among all writers, for is it not true that every writer is always trying to describe people and a country which have never been described before—never as he has seen them, as he has imagined them?

We simply have to get on with the job; we have to make the best of what we have. That, at least, is no secret; no joke either.

The Marquis de Sade

By Geoffrey Gorer

IT CAN BE plausibly argued that the moral philosophy inherent in the works, and implicitly in the life, of the Marquis de Sade is even more relevant to us to-day than it was when he was writing at the end of the 18th century; for his is the most coherent challenge to the liberal-humanist view of the world and of human nature which has ever been made. When he wrote, this liberal-humanist view was chiefly exemplified in the works of J.-J. Rousseau and his followers and Sade did not treat them as being of much importance; but to-day these views are dominant in the greater part of the literate world. For Sade it was Christianity, embodied in the teachings of the Catholic Church and enforced by the laws of France, which was the enemy whom it was his duty to undermine; but the views of Sade and of the Church about the unregenerate nature of man were much closer to one another than are the views of Sade and of the democratic humanists.

Sade is allied with the humanists, and can be considered a precursor of the modern scientific age, because he considered that truth and knowledge are absolute values in themselves. Knowledge is always and in every situation to be valued above tradition, superstition, and revelation; there are no limits beyond which knowledge should be suppressed. But knowledge about people depends on people telling the truth about themselves; and with a courage comparable to that of Freud writing *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sade put down in chiefly fictional form all the fantasies which most human beings hide in their unconscious. In his own words "he laid hands fearlessly on the human heart and portrayed its gigantic divagations"; the one human heart he could lay hands on was his own.

Sade's philosophy and his view of man can be reduced to a series of axioms:

(1) Pleasure is the sign that we are acting in accordance with Nature and with our own nature.

(2) Consequently, all acts which give pleasure must be natural and *right*.

(3) A major aim in sexual pleasure is to produce visible and audible changes in the partner.

(4) Any action which produces visible and audible changes in another has a component of sexual pleasure.

(5) Pain tends to produce more marked changes in human beings than does pleasure.

(6) "I" have found that "I" get intense sexual pleasure if "I" produce pain in others. ["I" can also get intense pleasure from suffering pain inflicted by another provided the situation is still under "my" control.]

(7) "My" experience leads me to believe that this link between inflicting pain and sexual pleasure is very widespread, if not universal. Most people lack the courage or the power to carry their unconscious wishes into action; but whenever courageous people acquire power, they will indulge themselves in these pleasures.

(8) It follows that we must expect a world in which power is *always* accompanied by the pleasurable infliction of pain. This is the rule of nature and by axiom (2) must be *right*. Any view of the world which ignores man's innate lust for cruelty is therefore necessarily false; in pursuit of the supreme value of Truth such delusions must be exposed and overthrown. Energetic people will always seek power; and the

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pleasure of power is the ability to produce changes in others. It would be a better world if man's evil heart were recognised and its indulgence permitted but circumscribed.

As a young man, Sade was able to take full advantage of the power inherent in his position of hereditary aristocrat; and he suffered his many years of imprisonment in middle age because of the arbitrary power of the French monarchy. It is therefore understandable that, in his earlier works (especially *Aline et Valcour*) he could optimistically hope that the sweeping away of the current set of oppressors—the monarchy, the aristocracy, the high clergy—would produce a world of freedom, justice, and reason, that his observations had only a limited application. When he saw how quickly the Rights of Man led to the guillotine, when he was imprisoned for moderantism under the Republic, he decided that power and cruelty were inextricably mixed, that only under a hypothetical anarchy (advanced in *Juliette* and *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*) would oppression be reduced to the minimum that the strong could physically apply to the weak. In any conceivable form of society those in authority would take cruel pleasure in dominating those under authority, and the less conscious and less physical the pleasures thus derived, the more unremittingly would they be pursued.

This challenge has still to be answered. Can any human beings be trusted in a position of complete power over their fellows? Liberal humanists, when without power, are quite certain that they would exercise power completely benevolently; but what reason have we to believe this? The century-and-a-half since Sade's death has seen infinitely greater cruelty from those in power than anything he imagined in his wildest fantasies; his view of the nature of man would seem to have received an overwhelming amount of confirmation. All social and political plans depend on implicit assumptions about human nature; and it is because he challenges all current assumptions that Sade remains an important and relevant thinker to-day.

Thanks to the French habit of preserving papers indefinitely, Sade's life is now as fully documented as almost any other 18th-century literary figure (with the possible exception of memorialists and diarists such as James Boswell). This is the more remarkable since, in the century after his death in 1814, there were very few available facts or documents, and a great many rumours and fantasies. In his will in 1806 Sade expressed the hope that "his memory will be wiped away from the minds of men"; and the activities of the police and his surviving son in

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destroying many of the papers which were found at his death seemed to show that this wish, at least, would be granted. But the records of his two law-suits and many imprisonments remained in the appropriate archives; the correspondence with the family lawyer was completely preserved; most surprising of all, his family retained a trunk full of unpublished manuscripts and letters. Over the last forty years all this material has come to light. Guillaume Apollinaire was the first author to treat Sade seriously as a writer (Dr. Ivan Bloch, writing under the pseudonym of Eugene Dühren, had paid considerable attention to his value as a documenter of late 18th-century libertinism and as a sexologist) and, in his preface to *L'Oeuvre du Marquis de Sade* (1909) produced quite a number of hitherto unpublished facts as well as an elaborate bibliography. In 1929 Paul Bourdin published a selection of the letters to the lawyer Gaufridy which clarified a number of incidents in Sade's life and gave the first taste of his extraordinary qualities as a letter-writer. A number of other writers occupied themselves with Sade, a few of them, such as Jean Desbordes in *Le Vrai Visage du Marquis de Sade*, giving some additional information and documentation.

Contemporary knowledge of Sade's life and work depends fundamentally on the year-long, compulsively scholarly work of two devoted students of Sade, whose lives have been overwhelmingly devoted to this subject. Maurice Heine (1884–1940) edited many unpublished manuscripts (including the first correct edition of *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*, Sade's literary masterpiece); recovered and published the original accounts of the two scandalous court cases in which Sade was involved; and established many details of his life. His former collaborator and literary successor, Gilbert Lely, continued the search in the archives of French and Italian institutions, and brought to light a very wide variety of unpublished records. Most important of all, in January 1948 the Count Xavier de Sade placed at M. Lely's disposition all the remaining family archives of his ancestor. These had been pillaged by the Germans, and some of the most valuable material was either lost or destroyed; but what remained was extremely rich in documenting the most obscure periods of Sade's life, the periods of his imprisonment in Vincennes and the Bastille under the monarchy and in Charenton under Napoleon. It also included a number of unpublished literary works—a couple of historical novels which have since appeared, without adding greatly to Sade's stature, a number of deplorably bad plays, and above all his long correspondence with his wife. About half these letters have since been published by M. Lely in three volumes, and they show Sade in a completely new light. His skill and vivacity as a letter-writer are outstanding, to the best of my knowledge quite unequalled in the 18th century; and these letters illumine both the warm and complex relationship between the libertine husband and the devoted puritanical wife and the dire results of years of solitary confinement on a liberty-loving and energetic man.

All this documentation was used by M. Lely to produce his masterly two-volume *Vie du Marquis de Sade*.* This massive study is one of the most completely documented biographies which have ever been written; it is laid out in the form of a dated record, dated to the day and month as well as the year; the justification of every fact brought forward is fully stated. Comment and interpretation are clearly separated from the presentation of the data; in this way one can discount, if one wishes, M. Lely's violent prejudice against the first French Republic, and the somewhat embarrassing bouts of lyricism à la René Char with which he seeks to praise Sade's literary work.

A purported translation of this biography by Alec Brown has recently been published† in English. This represents something over a quarter of the French original (462 pages in fairly large type, against 1,248 pages in fairly small type); all of Lely's elaborate documentation has been abandoned, and there are numerous cuts in the rest of the narrative. Any serious student of Sade, and any amateur of meticulous biography, will still have to turn to the French original (particularly as the cuts are not indicated in any way); but, despite all these omissions, and occasional awkward gallicisms in the translation, the richness of the original is not completely lost.

Until his long imprisonments started when he was 38, Sade was a libertine with a very wide range of sexual practices, particularly active and passive flagellation; but, except in his lack of common prudence, so that there were two public scandals and the private scandal of his elopement with his wife's sister, he does not seem to have been either more excessive or more cruel than a considerable number of his contemporaries; his interest lies in the fact that he treated his own tastes as a moralist, invoking a strange variant of the Kantian categorical imperative; as a scientist he explored and catalogued the range of sexual perversions and fantasies with a completeness which only calls for the statistical underpinning which, despite Kinsey, it has never yet received. He was an

* Paris, NRF, 1952 & 1957.
† Elek Books, 50s.

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original thinker of singular importance and, as I have tried to indicate earlier, is still of great contemporary relevance; for these reasons his life and his works are still worthy of serious attention.

THERE IS ONE ASPECT of Sade's life to which, though he supplies the full documentation, Lely does not, I consider, give sufficient emphasis. This point is the continuous and major role played in his life from youth to old age by the theatre and by theatricality. Sade could be considered "stage-struck"; and the relationship of this obsession with his character and his sexual tastes seems worth exploring.

First for the facts. Lely has not been able to document the long-standing tradition that Sade acted as a schoolboy at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand; but he takes the tradition sufficiently seriously to list the plays which were acted during the years that Sade was a pupil there. But from the moment that Sade attained independence as a young aristocrat on the town the theatre is a constant theme. His first-known mistresses were dancers and an actress; almost as soon as he was married he was engaged in amateur theatricals as an actor, and writer of epilogues; and very shortly after, in his earliest (still unpublished) attempts at writing, he was trying his hand as a dramatist. In his *château* at La Coste he had a "theatre-room" (the inventory of the furnishings survive) in which both amateur and professional actors performed.

When he was placed in solitary confinement, as it seemed for the rest of his life, under a *lettre de cachet* granted to his mother-in-law, a great deal of his time was devoted to thoughts of the theatre. In his letters to his wife he was constantly asking for the scripts of new plays; he wrote at least seventeen full-length plays in Vincennes and the Bastille; and a good portion of his lost *Portefeuille d'un Homme de Lettres* was occupied with discussions about the writing and construction of dramatic works. Sade thought very highly of his own dramatic works; he believed that he would make his fame and fortune by them when he was released by the French Revolution in 1790.

During his ten years of liberty (apart from his imprisonment for moderantism from December 1793 till October 1794) the theatre continued to play a preponderant role in his life. He had one play, *Oxtiern*, actually produced and published, though it met with little success, he was constantly bombarding producers and actors with scripts and correspondence, his best friends were apparently actors, and his last devoted mistress, Constance Quesnet, was an actress. His last months of liberty were in part lived at Versailles, where he acted the hero of his play

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at the local theatre. When he was placed under "preventive detention" in the lunatic asylum at Charenton he produced plays with the inmates as actors, himself took the part of master of ceremonies when members of the public were invited, and composed *vers d'occasion* to welcome the most noteworthy guests.

We know nothing of Sade's talents as an actor or producer—there are no contemporary records; but we do know about his quality as a playwright, for besides the one play which was published in his lifetime, the manuscripts of most of the others, which belong to the Count Xavier de Sade, have been examined (and excerpts from them published) by Gilbert Lely. Even Lely cannot find a good word to say for them, cannot bring himself to publish even one of them, even in non-permanent form, even as a warning; they are outstandingly dull, flat, and unprofitable, even for a period when the French theatre was at a very low ebb; they are mostly in rhymed verse of which all one can say is that most of the verses rhyme and scan. They seem to have no merit beyond facility, practically no original, and certainly no "shocking" ideas.

Their very badness, however, is interesting. Why did Sade so persistently over-rate them, so continuously press for their performance? Why did he think of himself as a playwright, rather than as a novelist? Besides his clandestine publications and manuscripts, he had openly published *Aline et Valcour*, a novel of very considerable merits which have never been adequately recognised, and a selection of his short stories, under the title *Les Crimes d'Amour*; and these works are serious, and worthy of being taken seriously, while the plays are not; but, judging by his correspondence, Sade seems never to have suspected this.

I SHOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST that the reason for Sade's continuous preoccupation with the theatre and his failure to recognise his own incapacity as a dramatist lies in the fact that, on a fairly abstract level, there is a close connection between theatricality and true sadism. What does a successful actor or playwright do? By his skills, he commands the emotions of his audience, makes them laugh or cry, shudder or exult, as he plans; he produces visible and audible changes in the people who are under his spell. But in a crude and concrete way, this is precisely what a sadist wishes to do to his victims; in a great number of cases one could say that the sadist is acting out a play with an audience of one.

Perhaps I had better state immediately and emphatically that I do not intend to imply that actors or dramatists are sexual sadists either overtly or unconsciously; at the most I am implying that some of the same psychological mechanisms are involved in both situations—if you will, that sadists are failed actors and playwrights. I can however recall that, when the Grand Guignol was playing in London in the 'twenties, an actress as saintly and dedicated as Sybil Thorndyke was reported in the newspapers as exulting in the number of people in the audience who had fainted from horror.

It is of course with the Grand Guignol, the theatre of blood and horror, that the link with sadism becomes most obvious. Sade himself seems to have produced private Grand Guignols. In a long letter of confession and justification written from prison he explains the presence of human bones in his garden:

> They were brought by the girl known as the dancer Du Plan; she is full of life and can be cross-examined. As a joke . . . a small room was decorated with them; they were used for this purpose only, and when the joke, or rather the stupidity, was over, they were buried in the garden.

Similarly in one of his playful letters to his wife (playful yet with sinister undertones of near-insanity) he suggests that she procure two skulls

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and send them to him as if they were a parcel from his home in Provence: "he will open it eagerly, see what's inside, and he'll be terribly frightened."

The same sort of stage-setting, the search for the *coup de théâtre*, can, I think, be discerned in some of the episodes of his two public scandals, particularly his treatment of Rose Keller at Arcueil; and it is a constant feature in the novels. The settings are frequently described as if they were stage-sets, designed by themselves to produce an emotional effect; for example, the mountain castle which is the scene of *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* has in its central hall two columns on which are hung the "necessary instruments of correction; and that impressive sight was helpful in maintaining the humility so necessary for parties of this sort, for from this humility is derived nearly all the voluptuous pleasure in the soul of the punishers." Here, as in *Justine* and *Juliette*, there is an endless elaboration of fancy dress, of *tableaux vivants*, of set pieces, of all the paraphernalia of amateur dramatics. The sexologists tell us that this quasi-theatrical acting out of a scene chosen by the client is very frequent in the perverse practices of many employers of prostitutes.

If I am right in thinking that some sort of theatricality or dramatic ritual was a constant component in Sade's sexual sado-masochism, then it perhaps becomes understandable why he could never admit his incapacity as a professional dramatist. If he could have been a successful playwright then he would have been able to achieve in a socially acceptable way many of the pleasures which he could otherwise only obtain from dangerously unsocial acts. Gilbert Lely, who otherwise puts little stress on Sade as a failed dramatist, suggests that as a public orator for the *Section des Piques* in 1793 he enjoyed blindly the tumultuous applause which he could never win as a dramatist. Lely produces this excuse because he has such a hatred of the first Republic that he cannot bear to believe that Sade's enthusiasm was other than feigned. I personally believe that Sade's enthusiasm during the first years of the republic was quite sincere; but he also found enormous satisfaction in playing on people's emotions.

As a man, Sade is important as a paradigm. Except in his honesty and his easy access to his deepest unconscious wishes, there is no reason to think him unique. Despite the efforts of the psycho-analysts, we still know very little of the reasons which make artistic creation so imperative for some people. With its reductionary, historical approach to human development, psycho-analysis tends to see artistic creation as a

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successful sublimation of repressed sexual or para-sexual infantile wishes, and would probably explain Sade's failure as a dramatist by the fact that his repressions were not strong enough, that he "acted out" too much.

But another interpretation seems to me possible: it seems possible that this mysterious drive for creativity is very primitive in some individuals; and that, when this drive is thwarted either by technical incapacity or public indifference, there is a "back-formation" to more direct sado-masochism, rather than the reverse, that the sado-masochism is a substitute for creativity, rather than the creativity a sublimation of infantile drives.

Had Mussolini been a successful dramatist, or Hitler a successful architect, the history of this century might have been very different.

Hiroshima and After

Japan Subdued. The Atomic Bomb and the End of the War in the Pacific. By HERBERT FEIS. Princeton and Oxford University Press, 25s.

Children of the Ashes. By ROBERT JUNGK. Translated by Constantine FitzGibbon. Heinemann, 25s.

THE DROPPING of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945, was an historic event which can be a matter for controversy in two different ways. As the first use of a nuclear weapon in war, and the first public manifestation of a power which has become continually more appalling in its threat to mankind over the last sixteen years, it has raised the moral question whether it should have been used as it was and whether it might not have been "demonstrated" to the Japanese before it was dropped on a city. Regarded, on the other hand, simply as a use of a superlatively powerful weapon in a hard-fought war, the event prompts the query how far it was indeed decisive, whether it simply shortened a struggle which was bound to end in Japan's surrender in any case, or whether it determined an outcome which might have been considerably different if the bomb had not been made or not used.

Mr. Feis, whose new book *Japan Subdued* is a sequel to his recent work *Between War and Peace* on the aftermath of the war in Europe, deals with both questions, but mainly with the latter, because his aim is to tell the story of the making of American policy in the spring and summer of 1945 in response to the problem of how to terminate the war in the Pacific by the unconditional surrender of Japan. For this task he has enjoyed, as a former official, an apparently unique access to American archive material, and his book contains information not hitherto available to the public. He does not always, however, treat his material as critically as he might, mainly, it seems, because he is so anxious to sustain what may be regarded as the official American thesis on the atomic bombing —that "it shortened the war" and thus reduced the total of casualties, both American and Japanese, but that it did not affect the final outcome of the war, which would have been just as completely won without it. Mr. Feis endorses this doctrine in its most extreme form when he declares that "there can hardly be a well-grounded dissent" from the view of the post-war U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey

> that certainly prior to 31 December, 1945, and in all probability prior to 1 November, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.

This air force claim is highly suspect because the strategic air service had such a very strong interest in post-war America in proving itself the paramount arm of national defence; in any case, it was not in fact the American strategy to rely on strategic bombing alone to bring about the surrender of Japan, for the contention that this could be done had been rejected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had decided in favour of a plan, known as Operation *Olympic*, for the seaborne invasion of Kyushu, the most southerly of the four main islands of the Japanese homeland, to be launched at the beginning of November.

Since Japan did surrender in the middle of August, Operation *Olympic* never had to be put to the test of action, but in retrospect the project always appears to have been hazardous in the extreme and might well have resulted in a major disaster for the invading forces. General MacArthur had been inspired to an excessive degree of self-confidence by his successes in the South Pacific and the Philippines, where he had indeed shown himself a brilliant commander, but he had never had to face the special difficulties and dangers which would have confronted him in an invasion of Kyushu. This invasion, to be carried out by more than three-quarters-of-a-million men with immensely long open-sea communications and requiring an unprecedented assembly of shipping within close range of Japanese *kamikaze* planes, would have been a perilous adventure even if the Americans had had accurate information about the Japanese strength, but in fact their information was very defective. The Japanese had four-and-a-half times as many *kamikaze* planes as the American

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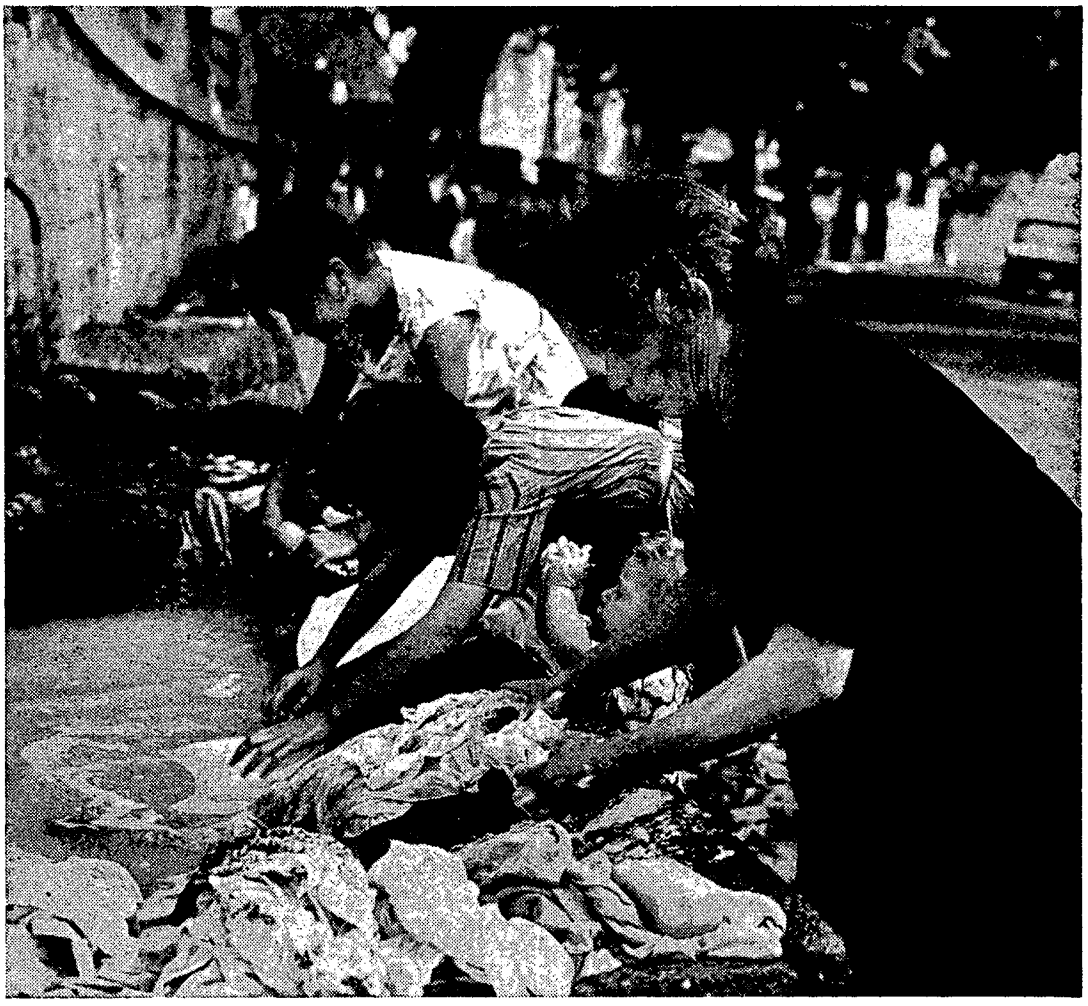

One word sums up the difference between this woman's washday and yours

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They have waited their turn at the communal wash-trough. They slap wet, heavy clothes on stones smoothed by countless back-breaking washdays. They are old at forty. This is the inevitable lot of women in parts of the world where they haven't enough steel to go round. In Britain we enjoy the advantages of plenty of steel—steel to make washing machines, steel in the plant that produces detergents, steel in the pylons that bring electricity, and steel in a thousand and one other forms to save work and make leisure more enjoyable. Britain's vigorous, efficient steel industry is making sure that other industries get the steel they need, in the forms in which they need it—730 lb. a year for every man, woman and child in this country, plus a big slice for export. Only steel can do so many jobs so well, so inexpensively. What other material is there that turns up in so many guises: now workable and readily shaped, as in the steel sheets from which washing-machine panels are pressed, now hard and tough as in a high speed drill, now bearing huge loads in a new bridge? Steel—the most useful metal known to man, and far the most versatile—has never had more work to do throughout the world. **THIS IS THE STEEL AGE**

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staff planners supposed. They were kept in tunnels for the day of invasion and hundreds of well-camouflaged and dispersed airstrips had been prepared for them; they could even take off from roads and no problems of landing existed for them, for they were not meant to return from their single one-way flights. The Japanese army was determined to hold on until the invasion; its leaders believed that, if they could repel it, they could then obtain a negotiated peace which would have averted an American military occupation of the Japanese homeland. Their attitude was not, as it is generally represented to have been, one of mere blind fanaticism, a wilful disregard of the obvious realities of their situation; it was based on a rational calculation of military prospects, even though there was a willingness to accept losses from the bombardment of Japanese cities which might have daunted soldiers in most countries of the world and did daunt the civilian advisers of the Japanese monarchy.

A peace party had existed in Tokyo ever since the beginning of the year, but its hopes had been set (in ignorance of the secret deal between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta) on obtaining Soviet mediation for terms better than unconditional surrender. Russia's declaration of war on August 8 destroyed this hope at the same time that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki provided the peace party with a persuasive argument for surrender subject only to the condition that the Japanese monarchy should not be removed by the victors. The army leaders were still in favour of holding out, arguing that the Americans could not have many atomic bombs (they had in fact exhausted their stock for the time being with the bombing of Nagasaki); that they were not in any case suitable for tactical use in battle; and that the Russians, though they would overrun Manchuria and Korea, could not cross the sea to Japan because they had not enough shipping and the Americans could not give it to them until they had themselves successfully invaded Japan. The Emperor, however, by a personal intervention in the debate, overruled the opposition of the army and decided on surrender, with the above-mentioned qualification, which was then accepted by the American government.

On the question whether this result could have been brought about by a virtually bloodless demonstration of the power of the bomb without the killing or maiming of a quarter-of-a-million men, women, and children, Mr. Feis is not very convincing in defence of the official view that the capacity of the bomb could only be demonstrated by its use on cities. The contrary view had in fact been maintained by some of the scientists who worked on the production of the bomb, but had been rejected by the committee of officials who made policy recommendations to Truman and Stimson. It is, nevertheless, very hard to believe that, if the bomb had been exploded over Tokyo Bay, two or three miles from the shore, it would have made less impression on the Japanese government than it did by the devastation of two provincial cities with a large proportion of their human inhabitants.

What the bombs meant in human terms, not only at the time but in their long-term consequences for the survivors, particularly the sufferers from the effects of radiation poisoning, is the theme of a readable piece of post-war reporting, *Children of the Ashes* by Robert Jungk, who is not concerned with the high politics of the bomb, but with case histories of ordinary inhabitants of Hiroshima. Those of them who did not die by blast, fire or radiation on that summer day of 1945, or soon afterwards, are the *higaisha*, the survivors. We also, in whatever country of a world in which nuclear weapons are now numbered by thousands, are so far survivors.

G. F. Hudson

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THE PRESS

After the Titans

TWO RECENT television programmes (*The Titans*, B.B.C. Television), for which I wrote the scripts, dealt with the rise, first of Soviet, and then of American, power. Since these two developments have been the key ones of our time, the programmes aroused a good deal of comment, both in the Press, and in private letters addressed to me. The thing that struck me about it all was the degree to which the Cold War dominates people's reactions to the presentation of such themes. Most of the commentators seemed to be, to a greater or lesser degree, consciously or unconsciously, committed in advance. They were partisans, and, whether they knew it or not, were rooting for one side or the other.

On the other hand, the partisanship by no means always ran on expected lines. Left and Right was no sure guide. There were cross-currents and undertones. Anti-Americanism cut across anti-Communism, and anti-Sovietism across anti-capitalism. There was also the additional factor, in certain cases, of an intense dislike of me personally, and of views which I had expressed on other occasions. Altogether a rather strange brew was produced.

I leave out of account the question of the degree to which the programmes succeeded purely as an exercise in television. Critics like Peter Black of the *Daily Mail*, who dealt with them exclusively on this basis, by and large reacted favourably. Television-wise, the programmes may be said to have been a success; especially the Russian one, thanks largely to Therèse Denny's brilliant direction and fantastic flair for laying hands on hitherto undiscovered newsreel material, and to the equally brilliant editing by Ian Calloway.

As for the script—I tried to write it as a contemporary historian: to stifle any personal partisanship I might feel, and to ignore any personal scars of wounds acquired through inescapable participation in a conflict whose outcome cannot but affect one's own residue of life, as well as that of one's children and children's children. Even so, of course, complete objectivity is unattainable, and perhaps undesirable. It is impossible to survey, however briefly and superficially, so huge and dramatic a canvas without at any rate seeming to see some pattern in it. Besides the actors—Roosevelt and Lenin, Trotsky and Churchill, Truman and Hitler, and all the many subsidiary and walk-on parts—there is the play, which, like any other, can only be presented as a sequence of events moving towards a dénouement.

BEFORE THE XXth Party Congress, the *Daily Worker's* attitude would have been easily predictable. They would have skinned me alive. For maligning the great Stalin, and suggesting that the renegade Trotsky, and other hirelings of Fascism and Imperialism like Radek and Zinoviev, had played their part in the triumph and fulfilment of the Russian Revolution, I should have been dismissed as a running-dog, hyena, lackey of capitalism, etc. Nowadays, things are more difficult. I was only accused of "distorting the role of Stalin in the years immediately following Lenin's death." After all, with so many victims of the purges already rehabilitated, who knows when Trotsky and the rest of the Old Guard may find themselves in the clear? Those "years immediately following Lenin's death" are steadily shrinking. Before long they may disappear, and poor old Stalin's corpse be moved yet again. The last indignity would be to bury him in consecrated ground.

"Another odd version of history," the *Daily Worker* television critic continued, was my "laconic reference to the fact that 'after the disastrous Munich Pact, efforts were made to bring Russia into an anti-Nazi alliance.'" He then goes on to repeat the familiar legend about how Russia wanted to join Britain and France in an alliance against the Nazis; how Chamberlain would not have it, and sent Lord Strang, "a civil servant without any powers, to Moscow." Again, it is interesting that the *Daily Worker* no longer attempts to justify the Nazi-Soviet Pact as such. That would be risky, since Khrushchev has made the Pact part of his indictment of Stalin. All the same, the film sequence of Molotov being warmly greeted by Ribbentrop in Berlin still hurts, and other less sophisticated Communist and fellow-traveller critics incautiously plumped for the old tirade about how Chamberlain was trying to turn Hitler against Russia, thereby forcing Stalin to make a truce with the Nazis in order to gain time to prepare for resisting their inevitable assault. This is Communist heresy nowadays, besides having been exploded by a great deal of evidence, such as Strang's *Memoirs*, and the documents from the German Foreign Office archives relating to the Nazi-Soviet Pact. It persists, however, among the lower echelons of the faithful.

Thus, a lady from Wembley Park wrote: "He [Litvinov] had for something like five years been urging a policy of 'Collective Security' against Germany, and as we hoped that Germany would attack Russia, we would not sign. This forced Russia into a pact with Germany, and by doing so got more territory in which to eventually retreat. In short, the pact was a military move."

A gentleman from Orpington obligingly sent me a copy of a complaint addressed to the B.B.C.: "The lies and deliberate distortions," I had "attempted to sprawl across the imagination of the Viewers," he wrote, "force me to wonder whether they were aimed at fomenting hatred between the Western Democracies and Communist States. As a Parent and Grand-Parent (and not a Communist), I strongly object to such interesting films being used for such shameful purposes, though I have to confess that I doubt whether even the late Dr. Goebbels himself could have distorted historical events more cunningly than did that oily-mouthed customer."

A letter that particularly interested me was from a business address in Westminster. The writer recalled the case of Prince Mirsky, a White Russian

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who, in the early 'thirties, was asked to write a life of Lenin. By reading Lenin's works, "he became a supporter of the Soviet Government, and returned (after writing the book) to the U.S.S.R." What a pity, this correspondent continues, that I did not follow Mirsky's example instead of being guilty of "so many mistakes, misinterpretations, and downright untruths that you changed what should have been an informative and interesting programme into a cheap, slanderous statement that could only worsen and not improve Anglo-Soviet understanding. . . . The sacrifices made between the wars prepared the U.S.S.R. for the anti-Fascist struggle, and incidentally provided you with the freedom to address millions through the medium of the B.B.C. You repay this sacrifice, both before and during the war, by using your talents to belittle their efforts and sow distrust and suspicion. Shame on you."

As it happened, I knew Mirsky, both in England and in the U.S.S.R. He was a moody, intelligent, rather attractive man who used to come and take a hot bath in a Moscow flat I occupied for a while. I remember him vividly, drying himself vigorously, and rambling on in a characteristically Russian way—somehow mad, and, at the same time, almost pedantically sensible and reasonable in the particular points made—about, for instance, "decadent" bourgeois writers like T. S. Eliot and the Sitwells. The only one he had a good word for was T. F. Powys, why, heaven knows! His body was oddly white and youthful compared with his weather-beaten, bearded face. He disappeared in the purges in the middle 'thirties. The particular occasion for his arrest was said to have been an article he wrote on Pushkin. Unaware of a sudden lurch in the Party Line, he had portrayed Pushkin as a lackey of the court, and so on, just when Stalin had ordered his re-establishment as a great national figure. If this was so, there was a certain poetic justice in his fate. Writers who attach themselves to an *apparat* need, of all things, a correct sense of timing. It was obvious, from talking to Mirsky, that he found residence in the Soviet Union little to his taste, and regretted having returned there. Gollancz, I remember, published one of his books. On the dust-jacket, the title "Prince" was struck out with a red line. In view of what happened to Mirsky, the invitation from the Westminster business address to emulate his career makes little appeal.

MOVING to the other extreme of the political spectrum, the *New Daily*'s television critic sourly observed: "There was certainly nothing objective, unbiased, or even friendly in the commentary on the Soviet Union. . . . One wonders how the tone will change when it comes to narrating the American story next week. All love and adulation, I suppose." This is fairly typical. Colonel Blimp to-day tends to be so apoplectically anti-American that he takes a sympathetic, or at any rate indulgent, view of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev, in his wide-bottomed trousers and wearing his medals, is a more sympathetic, and even U, figure in Cheltenham than a Pentagon general. Stalin, after all, was in many ways a gentleman of the old school. You can't say the same thing for Norstad. In a similar vein, a correspondent from Middlesex took great exception to a suggestion by David Floyd in the *Daily Telegraph* that, as Marshal Tukhachevsky had been rehabilitated in the Kremlin, so perhaps I had been in Lime Grove. It was an insult to Marshal Tukhachevsky, he wrote to Floyd, to mention his name in connection with mine, and went on: "Although the feature on to-night's T.V. would interest me very much, I assure you my set will *not* be on as long as that face is seen and that voice heard." How unjust is life, I could not but reflect. The late Marshal's life was dedicated to the liquidation of such Middlesex gentlemen, whereas all I ask is to derive a little amusement from them. He wanted to pack them all off in tumbrils (no bad idea in itself), and I only interfered with their enjoyment of *Punch*. Yet, in the eyes of this particular one, it is the Marshal who suffers from being mentioned in the same breath as me.

THEN *The Times*. In a way, it's position is as difficult as the *Worker*'s. Long past are the days when it could keep a correspondent in Riga, and loftily regard the Soviet Union as an outsider among nations. Long past, too, the days when the Third Reich looked like providing a bulwark of Christendom, and the Editor (Dawson) laboured nightly to keep out of his columns anything that might be displeasing to the Nazis. There came a time, General Booth (the founder of the Salvation Army) noted, when his rank ceased to appear in *The Times* in inverted commas. Then he knew he had arrived. The Soviet Union has likewise arrived; but the machinery for ejecting used images in Printing House Square, though highly efficient and well-oiled, cannot keep pace with the Kremlin's. They had only just digested Stalin on *The Times* when Khrushchev threw him out. They are like a man running after a moving bus; by the time he has managed to clamber on, dust down his trousers and arrange his tie, it is time to get off again, and change into another.

One of my favourite devices when I cannot go to sleep (which I recommend to all insomniacs) is to write *The Times* leader on the day after the Communists have taken over in England. Headed "A NEW BROOM?" it begins: "The new Prime Minister's statement of policy, if it necessarily contained a number of propositions unlikely to make a *prima facie* appeal to the more orthodox, or 'traditional,' schools of political thought, outlined a course of action which, provided excesses are avoided, should serve to reinforce the national economy, and sustain, with certain more or less drastic modifications, the existing structure of international alliances. The fact that Her Majesty the Queen has already been issued with a Party Card betokens a welcome readiness to uphold the monarchical institution, though again doubtless with modifications, and Lord Blank's acceptance of the Woolsack will reassure any who may, however mistakenly, have entertained doubts about the future of the Judiciary."

Of the Russian programme, *The Times* critic wrote that it suffered from my excessive "English-

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ness," which he hoped would lead to its being "accepted in this country with a slightly larger pinch of salt than might otherwise have been the case."

> The same old clichés and half-truths emerged relentlessly one after the other—that Stalin, though Georgian, was "the most Russian" of the Communist leaders (How many Russians would agree with this?); that OGPU prisoners were forced to dig canals and build dams to the greater glory of Stalin and the Russian State (no more practical reasons?); that recent Russian official history can be relied on when it attacks Stalin (whose purges are "infamous even in Russian-written history"), but at the same time that the Russian Government can be castigated for being ready unscrupulously to re-write history for its own purposes.

One imagines a similar roguish "no more practical reasons?" enclosed in brackets by way of comment on an observation that Negro slaves were shipped from Africa, and put to work on American cotton plantations, to enrich their owners. *The Times* critic was content just to be patronising about the American programme—"In the main the manner of telling was straightforward," and my commentary, "as well as being less deliberately coat-trailing than sometimes hitherto, was often self-effacing enough to let the main actors in the drama speak for themselves." He did not, perhaps, reflect that Russian newsreels seldom have a sound-track, and on the rare occasions that they do, the language is not English. The *Daily Worker* man complained that the American programme was "weighted down with dangerous over-simplifications," but liked "the demonstrations of the unemployed, and women carrying banners: *'We refuse to starve in the midst of plenty,'* reflected something of the bitter class struggle of those days." Had I forgotten, he asked, "the Soviet Union's request (rejected) to the Allies for the opening of a Second Front, which would have ended the war much earlier?" (One of the few sequences in the Russian programme which appealed to him was Harry Pollitt demanding the opening of a second front at a Trafalgar Square meeting.) The picture of America in latter years "under the 'nocturnal nannie' Eisenhower, and now Kennedy" was "incomplete." There was "no mention, for instance, of the U-2 spying affair." Actually, there was a mention.

IN GENERAL, the American programme was received more quiescently than the Russian one. There were few protests about rough-handling of Roosevelt (as it happens, one of my least favourite characters), but no champions came forward with anything like the zest of a correspondent in Herts: "What a curious mish-mash the Russian half of *The Titans* was! Magnificent pictures battling against a commentary that took a Here-Be-Dragons view of History. Stalin may have been the brute you say he was, but there's a lot on the credit side. Omitting Soviet achievements can only be attributed to ignorance, malice, or hysteria. I don't know which applies in your case. Perhaps it's just a 'diseased attitude of mind.'" Or of A. Houghton, who wrote to the editor of the *Bolton Evening News*: "I, along with many others with whom I have discussed it, consider the programme, *The Titans*, in its selectivity, its complete untruth, its sly half-truths and its distortions to be more in keeping with the 'Voice of America' than with B.B.C. T.V. . . . Your reviewer J. M. H. commented on the peasants who 'were the starving victims of collectivisation.' Surely they were the starving victims of opposition to collectivisation. They ate cattle which should have produced calves or milk. They ate corn which should have produced next year's crop." This, again, is a view of collectivisation which would not meet with the approval of Mr. Khrushchev, who has frequently abjured the methods whereby Stalin enforced it.

The fact is that America has few champions, and those muted, whereas the Soviet Union still has a zealous band, who often, however, in singing its praises, use a hymnal which the authorities have withdrawn from circulation. Pro-American sentiments are considered to be mercenary, if not shameful, and pro-Soviet ones disinterested and virtuous. Anti-Americanism itself fosters a pro-Soviet attitude. The English have always had a perverse love for anyone who seeks to encompass their destruction. They despised the Germans of the Weimar Republic and respected the Nazis. Any Anglophil Indians or Africans were considered contemptible, whereas a Nehru, a Kenyatta, or a Nkrumah deserves respect and admiration. This often baffles Americans, who still childishly suppose that providing military and economic aid is a way to make friends and influence people. Likewise Sir Roy Welensky, a Lithuanian Jew and former engine-driver, who is unaware of the nuances of the English temperament whereby trying to defend what he supposes to be their interests can only earn their hatred and contempt. A man I liked in the Press Department of the Soviet Foreign Office (subsequently, of course, shot) once remarked to me that the Soviet Union owed a deep debt of gratitude to people like the Webbs. I asked him why, thinking he would mention their services to the cause of Socialism, or one or other of their works translated by Lenin. Because, he said, they'd convinced the Soviet authorities that whatever harsh measures they might take, and however drastically they might alter their Line, they could count on the continuing support and admiration of enlightened opinion in England. It is surprising how true this remains to-day. The Communist Party as such may have lost much of its more reputable intellectual support, but Soviet addiction continues to flourish at all social levels. American addiction, on the other hand, in so far as it exists at all, is furtive and lurks in the shadows. Eaters of hot-dogs and wearers of padded-jackets usually salve their consciences by railing against American ways and products. As do recipients of trans-Atlantic cultural munificence. Americanophils are always hearing the cock crow thrice.

The *New Statesman*'s reaction to *The Titans* was more pained than the *Worker*'s, in the same sort of way that it is more painful to contract venereal disease from a romantic, than from a

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purely evacuatory, attachment. Its television critic, Clancy Sigal, compared the Russian programme unfavourably with a 20-minute B.B.C. Schools T.V. one, "Looking at the U.S.A." It might, perhaps, have been more journalistically appropriate to compare this programme with mine on America, but Sigal preferred the other comparison; indeed, made no reference to the American programme at all. The Russian programme, he wrote, "glided off the top of history with some crisp, clubman's narration and some freshly discovered film." He criticised the B.B.C. planners for attempting "to describe the birth and growth of the U.S.S.R." in a single hour, and, though he was kind enough to go on to observe that "it was good" to have me at the B.B.C. again, he considered that "it required a larger heart, and a more sophisticated political head," than I was "prepared to display, to do the impossible in 60 minutes." "There filtered through," he continued, "an abiding sense of affront that the Revolution should have happened. Little or no mention was made of the needs and hunger of the Russian people, the personal variety of the early Red leaders, the crisis of the World order. The basic film image was of bloody world-wide riots irrationally sparked by primæval eruptions from inside Russia.... The mistake of this efficient, superficial documentary was to assume that what happened was planned."

There would seem to me, speaking as a clubman, a certain illogicality in complaining, in the same breath, of a basic film image of "bloody world-wide riots irrationally sparked" and of a fallacious assumption that "what happened was planned." Sigal finished up by quoting with distaste a commentary on the programme by Peter Simple of the *Daily Telegraph* to the effect that not one of the faces of the Communist leaders had "a trace of nobility, idealism, sympathy, or even common humanity." Oddly enough, quite a number of critics (for example, Maurice Wiggin of the *Sunday Times*) formed a similar impression. It was not mine. Trotsky and Lenin seemed to me, in appearance, to stand up well to, say, Lloyd George and President Harding. Stalin, it is true, was no Sir Galahad, especially in old age; but then I normally expect those in authority to look like yahoos or buffoons, and am seldom disappointed.

IN TRYING to draw attention to some of the ideological implications in the diverse reactions to these programmes, I have left out of account the many press notices and letters which were merely kind and appreciative. Even in their case, however, the mark of Cain was usually apparent. They tended to like the Russian programme *although* it was harsh on the Soviet régime, or the American one *because* it was properly critical. And, of course, occasionally *vice versa*. To me one of the most congenial notices was Robert Kemp's in the *Glasgow Herald*, not so much because it was flatteringly appreciative as because it conveyed a grasp of precisely what I had been trying to say:

> Where the U.S.S.R. allowed him to expound his views on the rise of an intriguing and tyrannous oligarchy, the U.S.A. gave him an opportunity to review the horribly empty words, shallow vote-catching judgments, and "knavish tricks" of democratic politicians, with no ironical score missed, but at the same time respect for both Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt. By the time he reached his climax in the "tragic occasion" of Yalta when "Stalin looked after the power, leaving Roosevelt and Churchill to look after the principles—alas, they had none," his narrative had acquired a majestic but doom-ridden flow. As he speculated on the lost moment when the U.S.A. might have drawn the frontiers, but left it to Stalin, most viewers must have asked themselves if mankind is fated to be for ever ground between the tyrants and the men of goodwill, who seem so prone to lose the place at the final hour.

I cannot forbear quoting the television critic of the *Derbyshire Advertiser* on the Russian programme. My commentary, he wrote, "was grossly inadequate, not only for what it did say, but for its mis-statements." This critic was particularly incensed by my remark that Stalin was no theoretician. After hearing it, he decided that the only cure for my condition was to lock me up "for a week with *Problems of Leninism* and *Marxism and the National Question*"! "Stalin was, of course," he adds, "an outstanding Marxist theoretician." This may be the view in Derbyshire and in Albania, but emphatically not in the U.S.S.R.

The letter which touched me most because it was so patently sincere and truthful came from Burnley, and ran as follows:

> I viewed in to *The Titans* documentary, narrated by you, on the rise of Soviet power in Russia. As a young Communist (18 years) I have comments on it. In the beginning Russia was one of the only Communist countries, and naturally it was a struggle with the capitalist countries. They had to watch out for spies and aggressors as they were absolutely surrounded by the imperialists, who were trying to smash the régime up and prove it wrong. As for your definition of Stalin, that he was a monster, well, he may have been illiterate, but he kept the Red Flag flying. I am not going to say he was out for the workers, but I shall not denounce him. If I did that I would not belong to the Communist Party. Well, to be quite candid, I'm really not experienced enough to say. But I know other things. It gives me great joy to think there is a Communist State, and I would feel 100 per cent free if I could reap my own harvest, of course meaning be master of my own destiny. I listen in to the English Radio Moscow, and it's just wonderful, the world the Russians are building. No capitalists to rob the workers of their rights, and they want no war. The wall they have built is justified. It's the West that are responsible for this division—the oppressors, Macmillan & Co. If all working folk were united there would be no need for a wall. I was only discussing you with another Communist (who has been in the

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Party fifteen years) to-night. The general opinion of you is that you are all out for yourself and your own promotion, although I believe that you were once in the Communist Party. Anyway, there's one point of view I'm sure you will share with me, as I think you are rather anti-Communist. No War Over Berlin. Ban the Bomb. I do hope you will find time to answer me as your (no sarcasm) reply will be welcomed. As I said before, I'm not experienced enough in politics, and I do respect my cultural elders. . . .

THIS is the answer I sent:

I was very touched by your letter. Please believe me when I say that my intention was to bring out, not suppress, the precariousness and danger of the Soviet Union's position in the early days of the Revolution. Nor did I intend to portray Stalin as a monster. In fact, I still consider him to have been, in many respects, the most remarkable figure of our time. What I tried to show, and what seems to me to be true, is that Stalin succumbed to the lure of power, and that he turned Russia back from the revolutionary course laid down by Lenin into the traditional Pan-slavism of Russian imperialism. This made it necessary for him to malign and kill most of those who had been Lenin's associates in making the Revolution. It would be an over-simplification, but not without some truth, to say that he was to the Russian Revolution what Buonaparte was to the French Revolution. Now he has been condemned by his successors, in my opinion excessively. History will, in time, redress the balance.

As for my own personal position, it is true that, as a young man working on the *Manchester Guardian*, I drew near to the Communist position, without, as it happens, ever being a Party member. I thought then, and still think, that our way of life is foundering. Dry rot has got into the structure, and will bring it down. The Soviet Union seemed to represent an alternative, and I went there as a journalist for the inside of a year in 1932–33. This experience convinced me that I could never, under any circumstances, accept an imposed orthodoxy, or persuade myself, or try to persuade others, that intolerance, terrorism, and the monotonous adulation of a party, its ideology and its leadership, were essential to social salvation. I realised that, for me at any rate, freedom was a condition of life—freedom to think what I like, say what I like, read what I like, make what jokes I like, and form such judgments as my own poor wits, freely exercised, may provide. This is how I have tried to live, and how I propose to go on trying to live to the end, even though the power maniacs who conduct the world's affairs should succeed in making that end sudden and catastrophic. If such an attitude is being out for myself and my own promotion, then what your comrades said about me is true. As for war over Berlin and the Bomb, like every sane human being who considers, as I do, that the experience of living on this earth is, with all its pain and disappointment, infinitely worth while, of course I want no war over Berlin, and shudder when nuclear weapons are tested and accumulated, because I know that this means they may sometime be used. On the other hand, I am as doubtful about the efficacy of following the unilateralists and their associates as I was, before the 1939–45 War, about following Bertrand Russell, who in those days advocated receiving the Nazis like tourists, and loading them with kindness, if they chanced to invade us. I detest walls as such, whether of prisons or societies—whatever impedes the free choice of individuals to live where they will and how they will. Doctrines of exclusivity, like *Apartheid*, or our class system, or the Indian caste system, are all, to me, abhorrent. So are the frontiers of Communist countries, with their barbed wire, and watch-towers, and prowling sentries. It was nice of you to want my views, but, please, in heeding them, or otherwise, take no account of my being, as you kindly, but fallaciously, put it, your "cultural elder." I have little regard for mine; for the Herbert Reads, T. S. Eliots, Arnold Toynbees, and other pundits and mandarins, and should hate to be included in their company. . . .

Malcolm Muggeridge

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Was Stalin Really Necessary?

STALIN HAS SUFFERED a dramatic post-mortem demotion, and a monument to his victims is to be erected in Moscow. The present Soviet leadership is thus disassociating itself publicly from many of the highly disagreeable features of Stalin's rule, while claiming for the Party and the Soviet system the credit for making Russia a great economic and military power. Is this a logically consistent standpoint? How far was Stalin, or Stalinism, an integral, unavoidable, "necessary" part of the achievements of the period? How much of the evil associated with the Stalin system is attributable to the peculiar character of the late dictator, and how much was the consequence of the policies adopted by the large majority of the Bolshevik party, or of the effort of a small and dedicated minority to impose very rapid industrialisation on a peasant country?

To ask these questions is of interest from several standpoints. Firstly, in trying to answer them we might be able to see a little more clearly the meaning of such misused terms as "determinism," causality, or the role of personality in history, and so continue to explore some of the problems which E. H. Carr presented in so stimulating a way in his Trevelyan lectures. Secondly, an examination of the circumstances which brought Stalin to power and led to—or provided an opportunity for—crimes on a massive scale is surely of very practical interest, since it might help in understanding how to avoid a repetition of these circumstances, particularly in those under-developed countries which are being tempted by their very real difficulties to take the totalitarian road.

TO SOME PEOPLE, the word "necessary" smacks of "historicism," of a belief in inevitability, or suggests that the author wishes to find some historic justification, a whitewash to be applied to Stalin and his system. This is far from being my intention. "Necessity" is used here with no moral strings attached. If I say that to travel to Oxford it is necessary to go to Paddington station, this implies no approval, moral or otherwise, of the service provided by the Western Region of British Railways, still less of the project of making the journey to Oxford. It is simply that *if* I wish to do A, it involves doing B.

It is true that there may be alternatives. One might, for instance, do not B but C, or D. Thus I could go to Oxford by car, or by bus. However, it could be that these physically possible methods are not in fact open to me; I may not own a car, and shortage of time precludes taking the bus. Thus a judgment on the "necessity" or otherwise of an action in pursuit of a given purpose requires some consideration of what could have been done instead.

The range of choice is not, in practice, limited only by what is *physically* possible. There are also actions which are excluded by religious or ideological principle. For example, it is not in fact open to a rabbi to eat a ham sandwich or an orthodox Hindu to eat cow-meat. Thus if an "alternative" happens to involve such acts, it is not *for them* an alternative at all. This is because, were they to act otherwise, they would cease to be what they in fact are. A rabbi does not eat pork; were he to do so, he would not be a rabbi. The fact that he is a rabbi would also affect his outlook, his "freedom" to choose between alternative modes of conduct, where religious law is less strict: for instance, there is nothing in the Talmud or in Deuteronomy about smoking on the Sabbath, but rabbis would tend to be the kind of people who, faced with this "new" problem, would give the answer "no."

Thus, to come nearer our subject, there may have been a number of solutions to the problems posed by Russia of the 'twenties which the Communists could not have chosen because they were Communists, and in considering the practical alternatives before them we have to bear this in mind. In doing so, we are by no means driven to any generalisations about the "inevitability" of the Russian revolution or of the Bolshevik seizure of power, and *a fortiori* we need not assume that non-Bolsheviks could not have found some other ways of coping with the problems of the period. (Indeed, though the problems would still have been acute, they might in important respects have been different.) Before his assassination in 1911, the last intelligent Tsarist prime minister, Stolypin, expressed the belief that his land reform measures would create in about twenty years a prosperous peasantry which would provide a stable foundation for society and the throne. No one will know if he would have been right, if he had not been murdered, if the Tsar had been wise, if Rasputin had not existed, if the war had not broken out.... But of what use is it to indulge in such speculations? A 19th-century Russian blank-verse play provides, if somewhat inaccurately, a relevant comment:

> *If, if, if grandma had a beard,*
> *She would be grandpa....*

In assessing the choices open to the Bolsheviks in, say, 1926, the events before that date must be taken as given. The real question, surely, is to consider the practical alternatives which Stalin and his colleagues had before them.

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In doing so, we should certainly not assume that what happened was inevitable. "Necessity" and "inevitable" are quite distinct concepts, though some critics seem to confuse them. Two simple and probably uncontroversial propositions will illustrate this: it was necessary for 18th-century Poland to make drastic changes in its constitution if she were to survive as an independent state; and for China around 1890 a strong, modernising government was urgently necessary if many disasters were to be avoided. Yet the "necessary" steps were not taken and the disasters occurred. Unless we believe that whatever was not avoided was for that reason unavoidable, we would wish to examine the actions which men took, their choices between *available* alternatives, and see whether viable alternatives in fact existed.

At this point, many historians—at times one feels E. H. Carr is among them—tend to brush aside impatiently any talk of what might have been; they are concerned, they would claim, with chronicling and explaining what was. Curiously, this line is often taken both by those who believe in strict historical determinism, *i.e.*, that what happened *had* to happen, and by those who consider history to be merely a chronological series of events, *i.e.*, that by implication *anything* could have happened. Both these apparently opposite extremes agree in not examining the actual possibilities as they were seen by the statesmen of the period. Yet how can one speak meaningfully of the reasons for, or causes of, any political act unless one implicitly or explicitly considers what could have been done instead? In other words, we must be concerned with freedom of choice, or its converse, necessity, whether we like it or not, unless we hold either that freedom of choice is infinite or that it is non-existent.

There are several more things to be said on the subject of "necessity." One of these concerns what might be called consequences of consequences, or indirect effects. For example, it is difficult to marry a wife without simultaneously acquiring a mother-in-law. Or, moving nearer to our subject, a sergeant is an unavoidable element in an army, and the needs of discipline involve giving him powers over his men which he is likely to abuse. Bullying N.C.O.'s are likely to be found if an army exists, and so, given the necessity for an army, they become an inevitable consequence of its existence, just as the mother-in-law is an unavoidable appendage of a "necessary" wife. Thus, getting still nearer to the point, a situation which requires many bureaucrats, or which gives exceptional power to many policemen, may bring into action certain forces, certain behavioural tendencies, which are typical of bureaucrats or policemen and which, though not needed or desired as such, cannot in the circumstances be avoided.

The saying that "you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs" (or its Russian equivalent: "if you chop trees, the chips fly") has been used so often as an excuse for excesses and crimes, that we sometimes forget that you really *cannot* make omelettes without breaking eggs....

Now on to Stalin, or rather to Stalinism, since the idea of "necessity" does not of course mean that the leader had to be a Georgian with a long moustache, but rather a tough dictator ruling a totalitarian state of the Stalinist type. What were the practical alternatives before the Bolsheviks in the late 'twenties, which contributed to the creation of the Stalinist régime, or, if one prefers a different formulation, gave the opportunity to ambitious men to achieve so high a degree of absolutism?

The key problem before the Bolsheviks concerned the linked questions of industrialisation and political power. They felt they had to industrialise for several reasons, some of which they shared with non-Bolshevik predecessors. Thus the Tsarist minister, Count Witte, as well as Stalin, believed that to achieve national strength and maintain independence, Russia needed a modern industry, especially heavy industry. The national-defence argument, re-labelled "defence of the revolution," was greatly strengthened by the belief that the Russian revolution was in constant danger from a hostile capitalist environment, militarily and technically far stronger than the U.S.S.R.. Then there was the belief that the building of socialism or communism involved industrialisation, and, more immediately, that a "proletarian dictatorship" was insecure so long as it ruled in an overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois, peasant, environment. There had to be a large increase in the number and importance of the proletariat, while the rise of a rich "kulak" class in the villages was regarded as a dangerous (or potentially dangerous) resurgence of capitalism. It was clear, by 1927, that it was useless to wait for "world revolution" to solve these problems. These propositions were common to the protagonists of the various platforms of the middle 'twenties. Thus even the "moderate" Bukharin wrote: "If there were a fall in the relative weight of the working class in its political and its social and class power,... this would subvert the basis of the proletarian dictatorship, the basis of our government."[1] He too spoke in principle of the "struggle against the kulak, against the capitalist road," and warned of the "kulak danger."[2] He too, even in the context of an attack on Zinoviev and the "left" opposition, argued the need for "changing the production relations of our country."[3]

Until about 1927, a rapid rise in industrial production resulted from (or, "was a result of") the reactivation of pre-revolutionary productive capacity, which fell into disuse and disrepair in the civil war period. However, it now became urgent to find material and financial means to expand the industrial base. This at once brought the peasant problem to the fore. The revolution had distributed

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[1] "The Results of the United Plenum of the Central and Control Commissions of the Party" (1927).

[2] Speech on "The Results of the 14th Party Congress" (5th January, 1926).

[3] Speech to the XXIII special conference of the Leningrad provincial party organisation (1926).

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land to 25 million families, most of whom were able or willing to provide only small marketable surpluses. Supplies of food to the towns and for export fell, peasant consumption rose. Yet the off-farm surplus must grow rapidly to sustain industrialisation, especially where large-scale loans from abroad could scarcely be expected. As the "left" opposition vigorously pointed out, the peasant, the bulk of the population, had somehow to be made to contribute produce and money, to provide the bulk of "primitive Socialist accumulation."

THE ARGUMENTS AROUND THESE PROBLEMS were inextricably entangled in the political factional struggles of the 'twenties.[4] The moderate wing, led by Bukharin, believed that it was possible to advance slowly towards industrialisation "at the pace of a tortoise,"[5] a pace severely limited by what the peasant was willing to do voluntarily. This was sometimes described as "riding towards socialism on a peasant nag." The logic of this policy demanded priority for developing consumers' goods industries, to make more cloth to encourage the peasants to sell more food. At first, Stalin sided with the moderates.

The case against the Bukharin line was of several different kinds. Firstly, free trade with the peasants could only provide adequate surpluses if the better-off peasants (*i.e.*, those known as *kulaks*) were allowed to expand, since they were the most efficient producers and provided a large part of the marketable produce. Yet all the Bolshevik leaders (including, despite momentary aberrations, Bukharin himself) found this ideologically and politically unacceptable. A strong group of independent, rich peasants was Stolypin's dream as a basis for Tsardom. It was the Bolshevik's nightmare, as totally inconsistent in the long run with their rule or with a socialist transformation of "petty-bourgeois" Russia. But this made the Bukharin approach of doubtful internal consistency. This was understood at the time by intelligent non-party men. Thus the famous economist Kondratiev, later to perish in the purges, declared in 1927: "If you want a higher rate of accumulation . . . then the stronger elements of the village must be allowed to exploit (the weaker)," in other words that the "kulaks" must expand their holdings and employ landless labourers.[5] The "peasant nag" could not pull the cart; or it, and the peasant, would pull in the wrong direction.

A second reason concerned the pace of the tortoise. The Bolsheviks were in a hurry. They saw themselves threatened by "imperialist interventionists." Even though some war scarces were manufactured for factional reasons, the Party as a whole believed that war against them would come before very long. This argued not merely for speed, but also for priority to *heavy* and not light industry, since it provided a basis for an arms industry. Still another reason was a less tangible but still very real one: the necessity of maintaining political *élan*, of not appearing to accept for an indefinite period a policy of gradualism based on the peasant, which would have demoralised the Party and so gravely weakened the régime. It was widely felt, in and out of Russia, that by 1927 the régime had reached a *cul-de-sac*. I have in front of me a contemporary Menshevik pamphlet published abroad, by P. A. Garvi,[6] which describes its dilemma quite clearly, and indeed the political and economic problem was extremely pressing: to justify its existence, to justify the Party dictatorship in the name of the proletariat, a rapid move forward was urgent; but such a move forward would hardly be consistent with the "alliance with the peasants" which was the foundation of the policy of the moderates in the 'twenties. Stalin at this point swung over towards the left, and his policy of all-out industrialisation and collectivisation was a means of breaking out of the *cul-de-sac*, of mobilising the Party to smash peasant resistance, to make possible the acquisition of farm surpluses without having to pay the price which any free peasants or free peasant associations would have demanded. He may well have felt he had little choice. It is worth quoting from the reminiscences of another Menshevik, who in the late 'twenties was working in the Soviet planning organs: "The financial base of the first five-year plan, *until Stalin found it in levying tribute on the peasants, in primitive accumulation by the methods of Tamerlane,* was extremely precarious. . . . (It seemed likely that) everything would go to the devil. . . . No wonder that no one, literally no one, of the well-informed economists, believed or could believe in the fulfilment (of the plan)."[7]

IT DOES NOT MATTER in the present context whether Stalin made this shift through personal conviction of its necessity, or because this seemed to him to be a clever power-manœuvre. The cleverness in any case largely consisted in knowing that he would thus strengthen his position by becoming the spokesman of the view which was widely popular among Party activists. The "leftists," destroyed organisationally by Stalin in earlier years, had a considerable following. Stalin's left-turn brought many of them to his support—though this did not save them from being shot in due course on Stalin's orders. It is probably the case that he had at this time genuine majority support within the Party for his policy, though many had reservations about certain excesses, of which more will be said. But if this be so, the policy as such cannot be attributed to Stalin personally, and therefore the consequences which flowed from its adoption must be a matter of more than personal responsibility.

[4] See A. Erlich: *The Soviet Industrialisation Debate* (Harvard, 1960) for a most valuable account of the interaction between the debates and the economic realities of the period. The account given here is necessarily oversimplified.

[5] Paper read at a plenum of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Moscow, 1927.

[5] Bukharin's words, speech of 5th January, 1926.

[6] *Zakat bolshevisma* (Twilight of Bolshevism) (Riga, 1928).

[7] N. Valentinov, in *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (New York), April, 1961. (Emphasis mine.)

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Let us examine some of these consequences. Collectivisation could not be voluntary. Rapid industrialisation, especially with priority for heavy industry, meant a reduction in living standards, despite contrary promises in the first five-year plans. This meant a sharp increase in the degree of coercion, in the powers of the police, in the unpopularity of the régime. The aims of the bulk of the people were bound to be in conflict with the aims of the Party. It should be added that this conflict is probably bound to arise in some form wherever *the state* is responsible for financing rapid industrialisation; the sacrifices are then imposed by political authority, and the masses of "small" people do not and cannot provide voluntarily the necessary savings, since in the nature of things their present abstinence cannot be linked with a future return which they as individuals can identify. However, this possibly unavoidable unpopularity was greatly increased in the U.S.S.R. by the sheer pace of the advance and by the attack on peasant property, and, as we shall see, both these factors reacted adversely on production of consumers' goods and so led to still further hardships and even greater unpopularity. The strains and priorities involved in a rapid move forward required a high degree of economic centralisation, to prevent resources from being diverted to satisfy needs which were urgent but of a non-priority character. In this situation, the Party was the one body capable of carrying out enormous changes and resisting social and economic pressures in a hostile environment; this was bound to affect its structure. For a number of years it had already been in process of transformation from a political into a power machine. The problems involved in the "revolution from above" intensified the process of turning it into an obedient instrument for changing, suppressing, controlling.

THIS, IN TURN, REQUIRED hierarchical subordination, in suppression of discussion; therefore there had to be an unquestioned commander-in-chief. Below him, toughness in executing unpopular orders became the highest qualification for Party office. The emergence of Stalin, and of Stalin-type bullying officials of the sergeant-major species, was accompanied by the decline in the importance of the cosmopolitan journalist-intellectual type of party leader who had played so prominent a role earlier.

The rise of Stalin to supreme authority was surely connected with the belief among many Party members that he was the kind of man who could cope with this kind of situation. Of course, it could well be that Stalin tended to adopt policies which caused him and his type to be regarded as indispensable, and he promoted men to office in the Party because they were loyal to him. Personal ambition, a desire for power, were important factors in shaping events. But this is so obvious, so clearly visible on the surface, that the underlying problems, policy choices and logical consequences of policies need to be stressed.

Let us recapitulate: the Communists needed dictatorial power if they were to continue to rule; if they were to take effective steps towards industrialisation these steps were bound to give rise to problems which would require further tightening of political and economic control. While we cannot say, without much further research, whether a Bukharinite or other moderate policy was impossible, once the decision to move fast was taken this had very radical consequences; the need for a tough, coercive government correspondingly increased. Given the nature of the Party apparatus, the mental and political development of the Russian masses, the logic of police rule, these policies were bound to lead to a conflict with the peasantry and to excesses of various kinds. Thus, given the premises, certain elements of what may be called Stalinism followed, were objective "necessities." In this sense, and to this extent, Stalin was, so to speak, operating within the logical consequences of Leninism.

It is an essential part of Lenin's views that the Party was to seize power and use it to change Russian society; this is what distinguished him from the Mensheviks who believed that conditions for socialism should ripen within society. Lenin also suppressed opposition parties and required stern discipline from his own followers. (It is impossible to ban free speech outside the Party without purging the Party of those who express "wrong" views within it.) Indeed Lenin promoted Stalin because he knew he was tough, would "prepare peppery dishes," though he had last-minute regrets about it. While it would be going too far to describe Stalin as a true Leninist, if only because Lenin was neither personally brutal nor an oriental despot, Stalin undoubtedly carried through some of the logical consequences of Lenin's policies and ideas. This remains true even though Lenin thought that the peasant problem could be solved by voluntary inspiration, and would probably have recoiled at the conditions of forced collectivisation.

Is it necessary to stress that this does not make these actions right, or good? Yes, it is, because so many critics assume that to explain is to justify. So it must be said several times that no moral conclusions follow, that even the most vicious acts by politicians and others generally have causes which must be analysed. We are here only concerned to disentangle the special contribution of Stalin, the extent to which Stalinism was, so to speak, situation-determined. This is relevant, indeed, to one's picture of Stalin's personal responsibility, but in no way absolves him of such responsibility. If in order to do A it proves necessary to do B, we can, after all, refuse to do B, abandon or modify the aim of attaining A, or resign, or, in extreme circumstances—like Stalin's old comrade Ordzhonikidze—commit suicide.

BUT STALIN'S personal responsibility goes far beyond his being the voice and leader of a party majority in a given historical situation. For one cannot possibly argue that all the immense evils of the Stalin era flowed inescapably from the policy decisions of 1928–29. In assessing Stalin's personal role in bringing these evils about, it is

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useful to approach the facts from two angles. There was, first, the category of evils which sprang from policy choices which Stalin made and which he need not have made; in other words we are here concerned with consequences (perhaps necessary) of unnecessary decisions. The other category consists of evil actions which can reasonably be attributed to Stalin and which are his direct responsibility.

Of course, these categories shade into one another, as do murder and manslaughter. In the first case, the evils were in a sense situation-determined, but Stalin had a large hand in determining the situation. In the second, his guilt is as clear as a politician's guilt can be.

The most obvious examples of the first category are: the brutality of collectivisation and the madly excessive pace of industrial development. In each case, we are dealing with *"excessive excesses,"* since we have already noted that collectivisation without coercion was impossible, and rapid industrialisation was bound to cause stresses and strains.

TAKE COLLECTIVISATION FIRST. Some over-zealous officials were presumably bound to overdo things, especially since the typical Party man was a townsman with no understanding or sympathy for peasants and their problems. But these officials received orders to impose rapid collectivisation, to deport *kulaks*, to seize all livestock, and Stalin was surely the source of these orders. The deportation of the *kulaks* (which in reality meant anyone who voiced opposition to collectivisation) removed at one blow the most efficient farmers. There had been no serious preparation of the measures, no clear orders about how a collective farm should be run. Chinese experience, at least before the communes, suggests that milder ways of proceeding are possible. In any event, the attempt to collectivise all private livestock ended in disaster and a retreat. It is worth reproducing the figures from the official handbook of agricultural statistics:

LIVESTOCK POPULATION (MILLION OF HEAD)

	1928	*1934*
Horses	32·1	15·4
Cattle	60·1	33·5
Pigs	22·0	11·5
Sheep	97·3	32·9

Yet already by 1934 private livestock holdings were again permitted, and in 1938 over three-quarters of all cows, over two-thirds of all pigs, nearly two-thirds of all sheep, were in private hands. This is evidence of a disastrous error.

Its consequences were profound. Peasant hostility and bitterness were greatly intensified. For many years there were in fact no net investments in agriculture, since the new tractors merely went to replace some of the slaughtered horses. Acute food shortage made itself felt—though the state's control over produce ensured that most of those who died in the resulting famine were peasants and not townsmen. But once all this happened, the case for coercion was greatly strengthened, the need for police measures became more urgent than ever, the power of the censorship was increased, freedom of speech had still further to be curtailed, as part of the necessities of remaining in power and continuing the industrial revolution in an environment grown more hostile as a result of such policies. So Stalin's policy decisions led to events which contributed greatly to the further growth of totalitarianism and the police state.

THE SAME IS TRUE of the attempt to do the impossible on the industrial front in the years of the first five-year plan. Much of the effort was simply wasted, as when food was taken from hungry peasants and exported to pay for machines which rusted in the open or were wrecked by untrained workmen. At the same time, the closing of many private workshops deprived the people of consumers' goods which the state, intent on building steelworks and machine-shops, was quite unable to provide. Again, living standards suffered, the hatred of many citizens for the régime increased, the N.K.V.D. had to be expanded and the logic of police rule followed. But Stalin had a big role in the initial decisions to jump too far too fast.[8] (It is interesting to note that Mao, who should have learnt the lessons of history, repeated many of these mistakes in China's "great leap forward" of 1958–59, which suggests that *there are certain errors which Communists repeatedly commit,* possibly due to the suppression, in "anti-rightist" campaigns, of the voices of moderation and common sense.)

One of the consequences of these acute hardships was isolation from foreign countries. Economists often speak of the "demonstration effect," *i.e.,* of the effect of the knowledge of higher living standards abroad on the citizens of poor and under-developed countries. This knowledge may act as a spur to effort—but it also generates resistance to sacrifice. Stalin and his régime systematically "shielded" Soviet citizens from knowledge of the outside world, by censorship, by cutting off personal contacts, by misinformation. The need to do so, in their eyes, was greatly increased by the extent of the drop in living standards in the early 'thirties.

BUT WE MUST NOW COME to Stalin's more direct contribution to the brutality and terrorism of the Stalin era.

There was, firstly, his needless cruelty which showed itself already in the methods used to impose collectivisation. The great purges were surely not "objectively necessary." To explain them one has to take into account Stalin's thirst for supreme power, his intense pathological suspiciousness, *i.e.,* matters pertaining to Stalin's personal position and character. These led him to massacre the majority of the "Stalinist" central committee elected in 1934, who had supported or at the very least tolerated

[8] N. Jasny, in his *Soviet Industrialisation, 1938–52* (Chicago, 1961), has much to say about the chaotic planning of the early 'thirties.

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Stalin's policies up to that date. The facts suggest that they believed that relaxation was possible and desirable; many of them seem to have died for the crime of saying so. Nor was there any "police logic" for the scale and drastic nature of the purges. Indeed, the police chiefs figured prominently among the victims. True, there was a kind of "snowballing" of arrests, which might have got out of control in 1938, but this was due largely to the effect of the terror on the police, who had to show zeal or go under. Nor can any "necessity" explain the post-war repressions, the death of Voznesensky, the so-called "Leningrad affair," the shooting of the Jewish intellectuals, the "doctors' plot." Stalin played so prominently a personal role in establishing a reign of terror in the Party and the country that he must bear direct responsibility even where executions were the result of false information supplied to him by his subordinates for reasons of their own.

The atmosphere of terror had, of course, far-reaching consequences in every sphere of Soviet life. It became particularly grotesque and purposeless in the last years of Stalin, when the social and economic developments, plus victory in war, provided the Soviet régime with a much firmer base among the people, so that a considerable part of the discontent was the result, rather than the cause, of repressive measures. Many obviously overdue reforms had to await his death. As did Tsar Nicholas I, a century earlier, Stalin was able to delay "necessary" changes.

MANY OTHER EXAMPLES can be given of the personal role of Stalin. On the economic front, the miserable state of the peasants in 1953 was due largely to Stalin's obstinate refusal to face the facts and listen to serious advice. He contributed greatly to wasteful and grandiose schemes to "transform nature," and to a wasteful and grandiose style of architecture. In the military field, history will, I think, support Khrushchev's accusation that Stalin's inability to see the signs of a German attack, his unwillingness to allow preparations, his massacre of the best Soviet officers, all made a personal contribution to the Russian disasters of 1941. Stalin personally insisted on his own deification, the rewriting of history, the creation of myths. Some myths were based on lies which he himself publicly uttered. For instance, in 1935 he announced: "We have had no poor for two or three years now"—and this when bread had reached the highest price, in relation to wages, that it had ever attained in Soviet history. Or equally ridiculous was his claim, in 1947, that Moscow "had completely abolished slums." In this personal way he made impossible all serious discussion either of living standards or the housing problem, just as his wildly false assertions about "Bukharin and Trotsky, agents of Hitler and the Mikado," made the writing of Soviet history impossible in Russia. One could argue that the myth about "voluntary collectivisation" was an objectively necessary lie, in the sense of transcending Stalin's personality; indeed, this lie figures in the Party programme adopted by the 22nd Congress last November. But Stalin's lies went very much beyond this, and beyond the distortions and myths which can be ascribed to other politicians in other countries.

Throughout Russia, officials at all levels modelled themselves on Stalin, and each succeeded in imposing more unnecessary misery on more subordinates, stultifying initiative, penalising intelligence, discouraging originality. The price of all this is still being paid.

The urgent need to prepare for war has often been advanced as an excuse for Stalin's industrial "tempos" and for the terror. This can hardly be accepted. In the worst years of social coercion and over-ambitious plans, *i.e.*, 1929–33, Hitler was only just climbing to power, and Comintern policy showed that he was not then regarded as the main enemy. It is possible that Stalin was liquidating all potential opponents in the Purges of 1936–38 as a precaution in case war broke out, though this seems doubtful for a variety of reasons. But it is quite false to use the result of the war as ex-post-factum justification of Stalinism. Perhaps, with less harsh policies, the greater degree of loyalty in 1941 would have offset a smaller industrial base? In any event the Purges not only led to the slaughter of the best military officers but also halted the growth of heavy industry.

THE ATTENTIVE READER will have noticed that this analysis has some features in common with Khrushchev's. Before 1934, Stalin had been carrying out policies which commanded the assent of a majority of the Party and which, like collectivisation, had been accepted as necessary and irreversible by the bulk of Party members, whatever their reservations about particular mistakes and acts of brutality. However, after that date he took more and more personal, arbitrary measures, massacred much of the Party, behaved like an oriental despot. It is true that he was also arbitrary before 1934, and that he took some wise decisions after that date; but there is a case for placing a qualitative change around then.

But this is by no means the end of the matter. It is not only a question of making some obvious remarks concerning Khrushchev's own role during the terror. Of much more general significance is the fact that the events prior to 1934, including the building-up of Stalin into an all-powerful and infallible dictator (by men many of whom he afterwards massacred), cannot be disassociated with what followed; at the very least they provided Stalin with his opportunity. This is where the historian must avoid the twin and opposite pitfalls of regarding what happened as inevitable, and regarding it as a chapter of "personalised" accidents. At each stage there are choices to be made, though the range of possible choices is generally much narrower than people suppose. In 1928 any practicable Bolshevik programme would have been harsh and unpopular. It might not have been *so* harsh and unpopular but for choices which need not necessarily have been made. If before 1934, *i.e.*, in the very period of maximum social coercion, Stalin truly represented the will of the Party, and Khrushchev argues that he did, some totalitarian

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consequences logically follow. One of these, as already suggested, is the semi-militarised party led by a *Fuehrer*, a dictator, because without an unquestioned leader the consequences of the policies adopted could not be faced.

But, even if it is true that the triumph of a dictator may be explained by objective circumstances which certainly existed in the Soviet situation, the acts of a dictator once he has "arrived" involve a considerable (though of course not infinite) degree of personal choice. Those who gave him the opportunity to act in an arbitrary and cruel way, who adopted policies which involved arbitrariness and coercion on a big scale, cannot ascribe subsequent events to the wickedness of one man or his immediate associates and claim that their hands are clean, even indeed if they were shot themselves on Stalin's orders. The whole-hog Stalin, in other words, was not "necessary," but the possibility of a Stalin was a necessary consequence of the effort of a minority group to keep power and to carry out a vast social-economic revolution in a very short time. And *some* elements of Stalinism were, in those circumstances, scarcely avoidable.

THE SERIOUS PROBLEM for us is to see how far certain elements of Stalinism, in the sense of purposefully-applied social coercion, imposed by a party in the name of an ideology, are likely or liable to accompany rapid economic development even in non-Communist countries.

For it is surely true that many of the problems tackled by Stalin so brutally are present elsewhere, though events in the U.S.S.R. were, of course, deeply affected by peculiar features of Russia and of Bolshevism. The West should indeed emphasise the high cost in human and material terms of a Stalin, and show that the rise of such a man to supreme power in the Soviet Union was, to use the familiar Soviet-Marxist jargon phrase, "not accidental." Indeed, some Western historians who normally write "personalist" and empiricist history will begin to see the virtues of an approach they normally deride as "historicist"; they will analyse Soviet history to establish patterns, regularities, "necessities" which lead to Stalin. By contrast, an embarrassed Khrushchev will be—is being—forced to give an un-Marxist emphasis to personal and accidental factors.

But, of course, we must not confine our search for "necessities" in history only to instances which happen to serve a propagandist purpose. This would be a typically Soviet approach to historiography, only in reverse. It is particularly important to think very seriously about the inter-relationship of coercion and industrialisation, about the nature of the obstacles and vicious circles which drive men to think in totalitarian terms. Unless we realise how complex are the problems which development brings, how irrelevant are many of our ideas to the practical possibilities open to statesmen in these countries, we may unconsciously drive them towards the road which led to Stalin. They cannot be satisfied with "the pace of a tortoise."

Alec Nove

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LETTERS

Hemingway & Macdonald

PAUL VALÉRY observed that our greatest brilliances were allied to our greatest chances for error, and after reading Dwight Macdonald's *Ernest Hemingway* in the January ENCOUNTER, I could not think of a more fitting epigraph for part of the essay than M. Valéry's notion. The literary part is valuable. While not wholly new, and while I found myself disagreeing with some of it, his discussion of Hemingway's particular gifts and dilemmas, his examination of the question of style, are stimulating and profitable.

Valéry's observation applies to that half of Macdonald's essay which is concerned with Hemingway the man. Macdonald has painted a brilliant portrait, but it was not Hemingway who sat for it. The canvas is arresting, cogent, of one piece, but it is a *ding-an-sich*; its logic is fictive, related to a myth or legend rather than to a complex man who worked very hard at writing. Unfamiliar with this aspect of his *materiel*, free of facts, consequently unanchored, Macdonald attaches himself to an increasingly popular concept of Hemingway—that of a good-time Charlie who knew he didn't have it and so lived out a life of fraud and noisy desperation—and soars into error.

They gave him the prize, Macdonald writes in parody, *and he went to Stockholm and the King of Sweden put the medal around his neck and they shook hands. Mr. Hemingway meet Mr. Bernadotte.* Of course, Hemingway never left Havana for Stockholm and no medal was put around his neck. Carelessness is not at the bottom of this mistake; the legend is, the concept is. Hemingway, publicity hound and celebrity-seeker and hail-fellow-well-met, *should* have gone to Stockholm and Faulkner *should* have stayed at home in Oxford, Mississippi. But it was Faulkner, not Hemingway, who rented white tie and tails and had the medal put around his neck in Stockholm. That sordid nuisance, reality, had got things bassackwards once again; so carelessness and concept abet each other to construct a faulty portrait.

He drank a great deal now and wrote very little. This is an operative fact for Macdonald from 1950 on through the end of Hemingway's life. After the African plane crash early in 1954, Hemingway drank very little, and only wine at that. He worked three to four hours every morning, rarely missing a morning even after a late night. Many of the letters he wrote to me convey the statistics of his discipline. I quote a typical fragment, dated Feb. 1955: "I am really working very hard. Did 4007 words week before last, 4523 last week. 630 yesterday and would have done between 500 and 700 today if I worked instead of writing this letter." Mr. Macdonald, meet Mr. Hemingway.

His life, his writing, his public personality and his private thoughts were all of a piece. This concept is absurd. Is there a man—unless it is the Christ Jesus—in which all the elements are all of a piece? In Hemingway's case the public personality was physical, outgoing and affable; his life (active life? inner life?) was quiet, private, reticent, considerate and warm; his writing at its best manifested his unique way of seeing life; his private thoughts, as much as one can know them, were similar to any sensitive man's private thoughts—high, low, up, down, fuerte, debil, bueno, malo, and how in the devil can one say? Only this, though. Macdonald says that Hemingway learned style from Gertrude Stein, but he avoids Miss Stein's pertinent remark: "What a book would be the real story of Hemingway, not those he writes but the confessions of the real Ernest Hemingway." This observation of Hemingway disparities is closer to reality than the "all-of-a-piece" monolithic portrait.

I hate to think what his letters and journals would be like. I don't know whether journals exist, but Hemingway wrote a considerable number of letters. Hasn't Macdonald ever seen any? Shouldn't he have looked for some? No, because he knew *a priori*. Anyway, what may one conclude from letters? At least several unquestionably great writers wrote boring letters. Hemingway's happen to be superb (which does not mean he is a more interesting artist than Baudelaire). His interests were heterogeneous, he had surprising kinds of knowledge, his judgments were intense and candid. They all got into his letters. What is more, he wrote them in a relaxed and inventive language, which I suppose I could call Hemingwayesque, and so one found him, in spite of distance, very close by. This seems to me to be a basic requisite of a good letter, particularly if one remembers its function. But what may one infer from Macdonald's remark? That the letters are probably arid and empty. If that is so, it couldn't be wronger. The letters reflect Hemingway's great gifts for life and they are as good as a good novel.

But the Macdonald portrait insists on the absence of a private life in order to explain the physical death as a belated consummation of the spiritual death (protracted as it was). Another painter might have painted it the other way round, with the once great physique going long before the spirit (the wounds, the pain, the African crashes he never got over). Mr. Macdonald, meet the Bloody Horse.

HARVEY BREIT

New York City

Regina v. Penguin

JOHN SPARROW is most engaging in his quaintness. He ignores Wilson Knight's article in *Essays in Criticism* (October 1961), and his ill-concealed hatred of humanity and the honest literary expression of humanness can have brought joy only to the philistines.

Sparrow adds nothing to knowledge, but, by asking a series of largely irrelevant questions, avoids any discussion of what must surely be one of the most important topics in any serious consideration of D. H. Lawrence. (I take the Old Bailey trial as being one of those necessary evils, one of the compromises with society which creative

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man and his patrons are still so tiresomely called upon to make. The whole concept of obscenity in literature is somewhat infantile.) It is not, as John Sparrow trumpets, a failure in honest writing if Lawrence expresses himself in a formal pattern of symbols and classical references. There is nothing "covert" or "oblique" about such a presentation. It is no more difficult to take in Lawrence's statement of experience and simultaneous deployment of argument, than it is to comprehend Machiavelli's brilliant dialectic of anal connection in the *Mandragola*. And it is much more satisfying to share in the poetry of Lawrence's attempt to give experiential coherence to an aspect of sexuality—even if Lawrence fails because he slumps from poetry into rhetoric—than it would be to grapple with a prose statement of some such form as, "He then effected anal connection and her feelings could be classified under the following well-defined headings."

At the Old Bailey, whatever the redcoat tactics of the Prosecution, we were supposed (for the first time) to be seeing a work judged *in its entirety*. This is a pitifully tiny step in the direction of sanity, but it is a step. John Sparrow elaborates the obvious, when what is needed is an evaluation of Lawrence's success in re-creating artistically that common inheritance of sexuality in which all should be free, within the limits of others' freedom, to search for themselves. His questions are the measure of a frivolous world, saddening and homuncular.

FREDERICK MAY

University of Leeds

THOSE of your readers who wish to follow up the whimsical speculations of the Warden of All Souls on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may care to know that another possible clue to the mystery is to be found in Lawrence's reference (page 258 of the Penguin text) to Abélard. Lady Chatterley, it will be remembered,

> had often wondered what Abélard meant, when he said that, in the year of their love, he and Héloïse had passed through all the stages and refinements of passion. The same thing, a thousand years ago: ten thousand years ago! The same on the Greek vases, everywhere! The refinements of passion, the extravagances of sensuality!

Lady Chatterley would still have had reason to wonder what Abélard meant if she had remembered more accurately what he said. The passage to which Lawrence evidently refers is as follows:

> Nullis a cupidis intermissus est gradus amoris, et si quid insolitum amor excogitare potuit, est additum; et quo minus ista fueramus experti gaudia, ardentius illis insistebamus, et minus in fastidium vertebantur. (Abélard: *Historia calamitatum*, ed. J. Monfrin. Paris: Vrin 1959. Page 73.)

Whatever these novel pleasures may have been, they seem to have troubled Abélard's conscience greatly, after his emasculation; for subsequently, in the correspondence with Héloïse arising out of the *Historia*, he uses even more sinister expressions about them:

> Tanto enim tibi concupiscentiae ardore copulatus eram ut miseras illas et obscenissimas voluptates, quas etiam nominare confundimur, tam Deo quam mihi ipsi praeponerem. (*The personal letters between Abélard and Héloïse*, ed. J. T. Muckle. *Medieval Studies* XV, Toronto 1953. Page 89.)

All this of course is not very explicit; but it seems to me that Lawrence's detractors have, as Mellors would put it, "missed summat there"—and Mr. Sparrow, who has lately been acclaimed in the Sunday press as one of the finest minds in Oxford, will no doubt be able to set the record straight. One hopes he will also favour us in the near future with a detailed report on those hours which, according to *The Observer*, he lately "spent among the Greek vases;" though if his findings in this field are to be taken as clinching the matter there are some shocks in store for admirers of Keats, who apostrophised a Greek vase in a rather well-known ode and has not hitherto been suspected of sodomy on that account.

My admiration for Lawrence stops short this side idolatry; but at the risk of incurring the charge of humbug (which we sometimes bring a little too readily against opinions with which we happen to disagree), may I be permitted to draw attention to two passages not mentioned by Mr. Sparrow in his belated testimony for the prosecution? They are both uttered by Mellors, who alone, of all the characters in the story, has a claim to be regarded as Lawrence's mouthpiece.

On page 212, line 3, in conversation with Constance, the gamekeeper makes use (admittedly in quite a different context) of an expression which could hardly occur, in any context, in a speaker or writer preoccupied, as Mr. Sparrow would have us believe both Mellors and Lawrence were, with intercourse "in the Italian manner." And on page 281, lines 17–19, in conversation with Sir Clifford, Mellors makes an effective, if disrespectful, answer to the charges against him. As he is not a man to mince his words, it involves the use of a term somewhat more forceful than "humbug;" but, as Sir Clifford is obliged to concede, "no doubt it contains the real germ of truth."

JAYANTA PADMANABHA

Oxford

MR. SPARROW's implicit attitude to the subject calls for comment, for he is at least at one with D. H. Lawrence in treating the subject with enormous solemnity as a bizarre and esoteric perversion. In fact it is not uncommon, particularly in the Mediterranean area; and it is known among the British working class who call it "to soldier."

If we are to regard the practice as being of grave moral significance, it should be realised that its advocacy is an integral part of Lawrence's general gospel of primitive sexuality, phallic worship, "dark gods," and the like. Even so, it appears to me of comparatively trivial ethical gravity as

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contrasted with other consequences of Lawrence's beliefs: *e.g.*, a fascinated acceptance of the cruelties of Mexican paganism, and the eulogy on flogging in his essay on Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* in *Studies in Classical American Literature*—"Why shall man not be whipped? As long as man has a bottom, he must surely be whipped. It is as if the Lord intended it so. Etc."

To sort the wheat from the chaff in Lawrence's teaching is a compelling and important task; and the truth can only be elicited by open debate or free artistic creation. There is nothing within the ambit of human experience which should be excluded from intelligent investigation either scientifically or artistically. People who fuss around with fig leaves to disguise the cruder factors involved in questions affecting human happiness only darken counsel; and more nonsense is talked about sex in cosy coteries of males who consider themselves especially qualified to deal with the matter than anywhere else. The threat that the Common Law may be used to ban from the written word subjects that are permissible under the Obscene Publications Act is a serious one which should be met before the forces of obscurantism and reaction attempt to exploit the situation.

ALEC CRAIG

London

Strict guardian of our mores, Mr. Sparrow
Directs us to the sexual strait and narrow.
Let us revere this interchange of roles
As Warden of All Bodies, not All Souls.

R. A. RAPHAEL

Regius Professor of Chemistry,
University of Glasgow

I AM NOT sure whether Lawrence enjoyed a sense of humour. If he did then the reflection that his work has sparked the Warden of All Souls into proving so assiduously that the Law is a Ass might have provoked a chuckle.

In historical perspective, it seems probable that this trial will be seen not as the apogee of humbug, but as marking a significant breakthrough in releasing hitherto "undiscussible" problems into a wider area of enquiry and debate—serious or otherwise, as we ourselves choose to make it—and indeed in which area Mr. Sparrow and the readers of ENCOUNTER are now moving. The question poses itself: what use does the Warden make of this greater spaciousness? As in other historic trials, from this point of view the purely legal issues at stake tend to act as catalysts in a wider social trend of the time.

The narrow fact that the Law and numbers of counsel and witnesses of less perceptive scholarship than your contributor appear to have been made asses of in some degree may well be part of the price that has to be paid for the process of law-making and social change as we understand it in Britain—one that functions empirically rather than academically and depending above all on the willingness and courage of witnesses testifying to what they believe to be true. In the opinion of this humble correspondent it is they who render the real service to the community.

DAVID TUDOR-POLE

London

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *Mr. John Sparrow will be replying next month to the letters and comments which have been published in the last two numbers.*]

Author and Africa

I SEE THAT your Mr. MacInnes has been complaining of editorial mistreatment by a well-known weekly.* What would he have said, I wonder, if he had suffered my experience with you? Not once has ENCOUNTER noticed a book of mine.

Very well: I'm left-wing. Are you then prepared to recognise rebels only when they are safe, like Mr. MacInnes, or dead, like Orwell?

Alternatively, my books are no good? Possibly: yet they are noticed by all your contemporaries of any significance and they are published in many countries. Be reassured: one of them has even won a prize in the U.S.A. How fashionable—how conformable—does one have to be before reaching your august attention?

P.S. I'd just written this when I saw M. J. Lasky's reference to a book of mine in a footnote to your February issue ["Africa for Beginners"]. Maybe, after all, I have been fortunate in not having been reviewed in ENCOUNTER; for what Mr. Lasky has to say of this book is pathetically misleading. I did not "find" an "Athens" or "Milans and Nurembergs" in Africa's past: what I did do was to suggest that Meroe possibly played the part of an "Athens" in its own time and circumstance, and that some of the cities of the Western Sudan in medieval times had, for this great region, the same comparable importance as Milan and Nuremberg had for much of Europe. It is perfectly clear from what I wrote, I should have thought, that I was not suggesting that these Sudanese cities were directly comparable with Milan and Nuremberg. As to Mr. Lasky's smart little quip about Africa's "dim but very unsavage past," does he really think

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* *Editor's Note.* Mr. MacInnes is not "ours", nor, we suspect, anybody else's. The reference in question involves his letter to the *New Statesman* (19 January), which we append:

SIR,—Last autumn you noticed at length my *England, Half English*, and your reviewer kindly found merit in the book. Many of its essays, which describe changes in the English social scene, were first published by *Encounter*.

Among the suggestions in your recent description of *Encounter* is that it has not printed good work by writers little known when it first published them. If my own writing has value, this is not true. Before Irving Kristol, and then Melvin Lasky, supported me in what I was trying to say (and in the case of Irving Kristol, prior to the publication of my three 'London' books), I could find few other English journals, save always for the *Twentieth Century*, which would print these pieces; though later on they praised them when the only two journals that had really helped me, together with my publishers Messrs MacGibbon & Kee, had made my work better known.

My experience with the *New Statesman* has been different. Before Karl Miller became its literary editor, I was not asked to contribute to your pages. And on the only occasion when I offered your journal a contribution (in January 1960, on the racial situation in our country), this suggestion was ignored. There is of course no reason why you should have printed me if you did not wish to. But when I now read the *New Statesman* rebuking *Encounter* for neglecting unknown writers, I am bound, so far as this writer goes, to find the stricture unconvincing.

C. MACINNES

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that the medieval civilisation of much of Europe was so clearly superior to that of the Western Sudan? Maybe he could bring himself to think about the question.

BASIL DAVIDSON

Savile Club, London

MELVIN J. LASKY *writes*: I feel tempted to reply that Mr. Davidson is quite right, that we have been and remain deeply terrified of his ideas, that not since Marx have so many dangerous and powerful concepts been haunting Europe, that the unforgettable experience of reading his rebellious interpretations of German, Chinese, and Turkestan history and politics, buttressed by his non-conforming novels *Highway Forty* and *Lindy*, led us to vow not to let a line appear in these pages about this fearful seducer of men's minds.... But alas what must be said by way of explanation is more humdrum. We review relatively few books and not always because of their importance. Our pages have been so full of discussions of African affairs over the last two years that we have had simply to pass over Mr. Davidson's impressive two volumes of African history (except for passing references: my own "quip" in the last ENCOUNTER, Dr. Roland Oliver's encomium in a forthcoming issue). Mr. Davidson's conspiratorial mind and method continue to betray him badly.

As for the footnote which seems to have upset Mr. Davidson so, I see no reason to alter my suspicion that there is in his ventures into historical research an ever-fashionable element of romantic myth-making. I fail to understand why my reference to his finding an Athens, Milan, and Nuremberg in Africa's past should be "pathetically misleading." On p. 57 of his *Old Africa Rediscovered* he discusses Meroe and raises the question of its being "an Athens in Africa," and on p. 89 of the same book he writes that "Timbuktu and Djenne, Walata, Gao, Agadès—these were the Milans and Nurembergs...." What is pathetically misleading is this jejeune use of simile and metaphor in what is intended to be precise historical writing. (On the book-jacket there is a further reference to Meroe being the "Birmingham of ancient Africa.")

What I find even more childish and absurd is the notion that we ought still to be running around these days arguing whose ancient civilisation was superior or inferior, or that "my medieval culture was better than your medieval culture." It is a disservice to the new nations of Africa to encourage in them the same kind of ideologised nonsense which made for so many invidious doctrines in nationalism-torn Europe. If there was a Socrates in Africa's (or any other place's) "Athens," or a Leonardo in "Milan," or a Dürer in "Nuremberg," all well and good; if not, not. But I can only repeat to Mr. Davidson that I would much prefer African liberty and equality to be argued soberly from the ethics of human brotherhood than from hazy chronicles (actual or mythical) of ancient grandeur —for I remain appalled at the implication that if Africans had no glorious past behind them they would somehow be ineligible to-day for freedom and fraternity.

AUTHORS

John Strachey was Secretary of State for War in the Labour Government, and subsequently Labour spokesman on defence problems. His recent books include *Contemporary Capitalism* (1956) and *The End of Empire* (1959). His ENCOUNTER pamphlet, "The Great Awakening," has just had its third printing.... **Maurice Cranston** is a lecturer in Political Science at the London School of Economics, but his interest in philosophy is not confined to its political aspects. His publications include *Freedom* (1953), *Human Rights Today* (1954), a biography of *John Locke* (1957), and their titles demonstrate a range of interests firmly centred on the English liberal tradition.... **David Marquand** is a young writer on English politics, who, after doing some research in Russian history at Oxford, became a leader-writer on *The Guardian*. At present he is mainly occupied with writing the official biography of Ramsay Macdonald, a task which he finds "increasingly absorbing." ... **Milovan Djilas,** a leading Montenegran partisan and associate of Tito, went to prison in Yugoslavia in December, 1956, following the publication of an essay by him on the Hungarian rising as well as his criticisms of Communist bureaucracy contained in *The New Class*. He was released in January last year, and, since then, has been devoting himself to literature and other non-political forms of writing.... **Michael Howard** is lecturer in Military History in the University of London. He has edited a symposium on *Soldiers and Governments* as well as producing a Penguin special on *Disengagement in Europe* (1958). His latest book is a history of the Franco-Prussian war, which has received high praise as a piece of lucid and authoritative historical writing (see D. W. Brogan's review article in the March ENCOUNTER).

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Recently ENCOUNTER celebrated the publication of its 100th number. Readers may like to be reminded that complete sets of past issues of ENCOUNTER have been recorded on microfilm for permanent reference. This facility is of particular value to librarians who cannot now obtain a complete set of the original editions owing to many issues being out of print.

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The Wind

AND

The Rain

AN EASTER BOOK FOR 1962

EDITED BY

Neville Braybrooke

On April 2nd the distinguished literary quarterly 'The Wind and The Rain', which was founded in 1940 and flourished for 11 years under the editorship of Neville Braybrooke, returns as an Annual Easter Book. The aim of the original quarterly was to "Interpret the Christian order in the light of current affairs, philosophy, literature and the arts." The aim remains unchanged.

Among the many contributions to this first issue: a long extract from *William Gerhardi's* new and as yet unfinished novel; *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, his writings and influence (with two essays by de Chardin himself); literary studies ranging from *Simone Weil* on "The Iliad" to *Walter Bagehot* on Tennyson's "Idylls"; among poets are *Djuna Barnes*, *James Michie*; a section of juvenilia includes *John Cowper Powys*, *John Betjeman*, *Angus Wilson*; illustrations by *Joan Hassall*, *David Jones* and others.

Neville Braybrooke in 1958 edited a symposium for T. S. Eliot's seventieth birthday and has published three books on London. His most recent book, his first novel, 'The Idler' was published in 1961.

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